

RAMBLES &
RECOLLECTIONS

VOL. I

SLEEMAN



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RAMBLES AND RECOLLECTIONS

OF AN

INDIAN OFFICIAL



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OF

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VOL. V

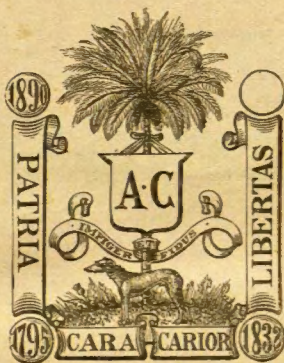
RAMBLES AND RECOLLECTIONS

OF AN

INDIAN OFFICIAL

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I



Westminster

ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE AND COMPANY

14 PARLIAMENT STREET S.W.

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RAMBLES
AND
RECOLLECTIONS
OF AN
INDIAN OFFICIAL

BY
MAJOR-GENERAL SIR W. H. SLEEMAN K.C.B.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

A NEW EDITION
EDITED BY
VINCENT ARTHUR SMITH I.C.S.

Westminster
ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE AND COMPANY
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AUTHOR'S DEDICATION

MY DEAR SISTER,—

Were any one to ask your countrymen in India what has been their greatest source of pleasure while there, perhaps nine in ten would say, the letters which they receive from their sisters at home. These, of all things, perhaps, tend most to link our affections with home by filling the landscapes, so dear to our recollections, with ever varying groups of the family circles, among whom our infancy and our boyhood have been passed; and among whom we still hope to spend the winter of our days.

They have a very happy facility in making us familiar with the new additions made from time to time to the *dramatis personæ* of these scenes after we quit them, in the character of husbands, wives, children, or friends; and, while thus contributing so much to our happiness, they no doubt tend to make us better citizens of the world, and servants of government, than we should otherwise be, for, in our "struggles through life in India," we have all, more or less, an eye to the approbation of those circles which our kind sisters represent—who may, therefore, be considered in the exalted light of a valuable species of *unpaid magistracy* to the Government of India.

No brother has ever had a kinder or better correspondent than I have had in you, my dear sister; and it was the consciousness of having left many of your valued letters unanswered, in the press of official duties, that made me first think of devoting a part of my leisure to you in these "*Rambles and Recollections*," while on my way from the banks of the Nerbudda river to the Himālaya mountains, in search of health, in the end of 1835 and beginning of 1836. To what I wrote during that journey I have now added a few notes, observations, and conversations with natives, on the subjects which my narrative seemed to embrace; and the whole will, I hope, interest and amuse you and the other members of our family; and appear, perchance, not altogether uninteresting or uninstructional to those who are strangers to us both.

Of one thing I must beg you to be assured, that I have nowhere

indulged in fiction, either in the narrative, the recollections, or the conversations. What I relate on the testimony of others I believe to be true ; and what I relate upon my own you may rely upon as being so. Had I chosen to write a work of fiction, I might possibly have made it a good deal more interesting ; but I question whether it would have been so much valued by you, or so useful to others ; and these are the objects I have had in view. The work may, perhaps, tend to make the people of India better understood by those of my own countrymen whose destinies are cast among them, and inspire more kindly feelings towards them. Those parts which, to the general reader, will seem dry and tedious, may be considered, by the Indian statesman, as the most useful and important.

The opportunities of observation, which varied employment has given me, have been such as fall to the lot of few ; but, although I have endeavoured to make the most of them, the time of public servants is not their own ; and that of few men has been more exclusively devoted to the service of their masters than mine. It may be, however, that the world, or that part of it which ventures to read these pages, will think that it had been better had I not been left even the little leisure that has been devoted to them.

Your ever affectionate brother,

W. H. SLEEMAN.



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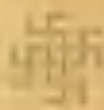
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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE "Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official," always a costly book, has for many years past been scarce and difficult to procure. Among the crowd of books descriptive of Indian scenery, manners, and customs, the sterling merits of Sir William Sleeman's work have secured it pre-eminence, and kept it in constant demand, notwithstanding the lapse of nearly fifty years since its publication. Its right to a place in the ORIENTAL MISCELLANY may, therefore, be readily conceded. The high reputation of this work does not rest upon its strictly literary qualities. The author was a busy man, immersed all his life in the practical affairs of administration, and too full of his subject to be careful of strict correctness of style or minute accuracy of expression. Yet, so great is the intrinsic value of his observations, and so attractive are the sincerity and sympathy with which he discusses a vast range of topics, that the reader refuses to be offended by slight formal defects in expression or arrangement, and willingly yields to the charm of the author's genial and unstudied conversation.

It would be very difficult to name any other book so full of instruction for the young Anglo-Indian administrator. When this work was published in 1844 the author had had thirty-five years' varied experience of Indian life, and had accumulated and assimilated an immense store of know-

ledge concerning the history, manners, and modes of thought of the complex population of India. He thoroughly understood the peculiarities of the various native races, and the characteristics which distinguish them from the nations of Europe ; while his sympathetic insight into native life had not orientalized him, nor had it ever for one moment caused him to forget his position and heritage as an Englishman. This attitude of sane and discriminating sympathy is the right attitude for the Englishman in India.

To enumerate the topics on which wise and profitable observations will be found in this book would be superfluous. The wine is good, and needs no bush. So much may be said that the book is one to interest that nondescript person, the general reader, as well as the Anglo-Indian official. Besides good advice and sound teaching on matters of policy and administration, it contains many charming, though inartificial, descriptions of scenery and native customs, many ingenious speculations, and some capital stories. The ethnologist, the antiquary, the geologist, the soldier, and the missionary will all find in it something to suit their several tastes.

In this edition the numerous misprints of the original edition have been all, and, for the most part, silently corrected. The punctuation, which was extremely erratic, has been freely modified, and the spelling of Indian words and names has been systematized. Two paragraphs, misplaced in the original edition at the end of Chapter XLVIII of Volume I, have been removed, and inserted in their proper place at the end of Chapter XLVII ; and the supplementary notes printed at the end of the second volume of the original edition have been brought up to the positions which they were intended to occupy. Chapters XXXVII to XLVI of the first volume, describing the contest for empire between the sons of Shāh Jahān, are in

substance only a free version of Bernier's work 'entitled, "The Late Revolution of the Empire of the Great Mogol." These chapters have not been reprinted because the history of that revolution can now be read much more satisfactorily in Mr. Constable's edition of Bernier's Travels. Seven chapters have been transferred from the second volume of the original to the first volume of this edition. Except as above stated, the text of the present edition of the "Rambles and Recollections" is a faithful reprint of the Author's text.

In the spelling of names and other words of Oriental languages the Editor has "endeavoured to strike a mean between popular usage and academic precision, preferring to incur the charge of looseness to that of pedantry." Diacritical marks intended to distinguish between the various sibilants, dentals, nasals, and so forth, of the Arabic and Sanskrit alphabets, have been purposely omitted. Long vowels are marked by the sign $\bar{}$, which is much preferable to the ambiguous acute accent used for the purpose in the official publications of the Indian Government. Except in a few familiar words, such as Nerbudda and Hindoo, which are spelled in the traditional manner, vowels are to be pronounced as in Italian, or as in the following English examples, namely:— \bar{a} , as in "call"; e , or \bar{e} , as the medial vowel in "cake"; i , as in "kill"; \bar{i} , as the medial vowels in "keel"; u , as in "full"; \bar{u} , as the medial vowels in "fool"; o , or \bar{o} , as in "bone"; ai , or $\bar{a}i$, as "aye"; and au , as the medial sound in "fowl." Short a , without mark, is generally pronounced like the u in "but."

The Editor's notes, being designed merely to explain and illustrate the text, and to render the book fully intelligible and helpful to readers of the present day, have been compressed into the narrowest possible limits. Even India changes, and observations and criticisms which were perfectly true sixty years ago can no longer be safely applied

without explanation to the India of to-day. The Author's few notes are distinguished by his initials.

A copious analytical index has been compiled. The bibliography is as complete as careful inquiry could make it, but it is probable that some anonymous papers by the Author, published in periodicals, may have escaped notice.

The memoir of Sir William Sleeman is based on the slight sketch prefixed to the "Journey through the Kingdom of Oude," supplemented by much additional matter derived from his published works and correspondence, and his unpublished letters and other papers kindly communicated by his surviving son, Captain Henry Sleeman. Ample materials exist for a full account of Sir William Sleeman's noble and interesting life, which well deserves to be recorded in detail; but the necessary limitations of these volumes preclude the Editor from making free use of the biographical matter at his command.

The reproduction of the twenty-four coloured plates of varying merit which enrich the original edition has not been considered desirable. The portrait of the Author which forms the frontispiece to the first volume of this edition is engraved from a picture in the possession of Captain Sleeman. The map in the second volume shows clearly the route taken by the Author in the journey the description of which is the leading theme of the book.

The Editor is indebted to several kind correspondents for answers to sundry queries concerning details, and desires to express his acknowledgments to Mr. Archibald Constable for various hints and references.



MEMOIR

OF

MAJ.-GEN. SIR WILLIAM HENRY SLEEMAN, K.C.B.

THE Sleemans, an ancient yeoman family, for several generations owned and farmed the estate of Pool Park in the parish of Saint Judy, in the county of Cornwall. Philip Sleeman, who married Mary Spry, a member of a distinguished family in the same county, added to his occupation as gentleman-farmer that of Supervisor of Excise. While he was stationed at Stratton, in Cornwall, on the 8th August, 1788, his son William Henry was born. Ten years later Philip Sleeman died at Bideford, in Devon. His widow, the author's mother, survived until 1818.

In 1809, at the age of twenty-one, William Henry Sleeman was nominated, through the good offices of Lord De Dunstanville, to an Infantry Cadetship in the Bengal army. On the 24th of March, in the same year, he sailed from Gravesend in the ship *Devonshire*, and, having touched at Madeira and the Cape, reached India towards the close of the year. He arrived at the cantonment of Dinapore, near Patna, on the 20th December, and on Christmas Day began his military career as a cadet. He at once applied himself with exemplary diligence to the study of the Arabic and Persian languages, and of the religions and customs of

India. Passing in due course through the ordinary early stages of military life, he was promoted to the rank of ensign on the 23rd September, 1810, and to that of lieutenant on the 16th December, 1814.

Lieutenant Sleeman served in the war with Nepāl, which began in 1814 and terminated in 1816. During the campaign he narrowly escaped death from a violent epidemic fever, which nearly destroyed his regiment. "Three hundred of my own regiment," he observes, "consisting of about seven hundred, were obliged to be sent to their homes on sick leave. The greater number of those who remained continued to suffer, and a great many died. Of about ten European officers present with my regiment, seven had the fever and five died of it, almost all in a state of delirium. I was myself one of the two who survived, and I was for many days delirious."¹

The services of Lieutenant Sleeman during the war attracted attention, and he was, accordingly, in 1816, selected to report on certain claims to prize-money. The report submitted by him in February, 1817, was accepted as "able, impartial, and satisfactory." After the termination of the war he served with his regiment at Allahabad, and in the neighbouring district of Partābgarh, where he laid the foundation of the intimate knowledge of Oudh affairs displayed in his later writings.

In 1820 he was selected for civil employ, and was appointed Junior Assistant to the Agent of the Governor-General, administering the Sāgar and Nerbudda territories. These territories, which had been annexed from the Marāthās two years previously, are now included in the jurisdiction of the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces. In such a recently-conquered country, where the sale of all widows by auction for the benefit of the Treasury, and other strange customs still prevailed, the

¹ "Journey through the Kingdom of Oude," vol. ii, p. 105.

abilities of an able and zealous young officer had ample scope. Sleeman, after a brief apprenticeship, received, in 1822, the independent civil charge of the district of Narsinghpur, in the Nerbudda valley, and there, for more than two years, "by far the most laborious of his life," his whole attention was engrossed in preventing and remedying the disorders of his district.

While at Narsinghpur, Sleeman received on the 24th April, 1824, brevet rank as Captain. In 1825, he was transferred, and on the 23rd September of the following year, was gazetted Captain. In 1826, failure of health compelled him to take leave on medical certificate. In March, 1828, Captain Sleeman assumed civil and executive charge of the Jabalpur District, from which he was transferred to Sāgar in January, 1831. While stationed at Jabalpur, he married, on the 21st June, 1829, Amélie Josephine, the daughter of Count Blondin De Fontenne, a French nobleman.

Mr. C. Fraser, on return from leave in January, 1832, resumed charge of the revenue and civil duties of the Sāgar district, leaving the magisterial duties to Captain Sleeman, who continued to discharge them till January, 1835. By the Resolution of Government dated 10th January, 1835, Captain Sleeman was directed to fix his headquarters at Jabalpur, and was appointed General Superintendent of the Operations for the Suppression of Thuggee, being relieved from every other charge. In 1836 his health again broke down, and he was obliged to take leave on medical certificate. He marched, accompanied by his wife and little son, through the Jabalpur, Damoh, and Sāgar districts of the Agency, and then through the Native States of Orchhā, Datiyā, and Gwālior, arriving at Agra on the 1st January, 1836. After a brief halt at Agra, he proceeded through the Bharatpur State to Delhi and Meerut, and thence to Simla. During his march from Jabalpur to Meerut he

amused himself by keeping the journal which forms the basis of the "Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official." The manuscript of this work was completed in 1839, though not given to the world till 1844. On the 1st of February, 1837, Sleeman was gazetted Major. During the same year he made a tour in the interior of the Himālayas, which he described at length in an unpublished journal. Later in the year he went down to Calcutta to see his boy started on the voyage home.

In February, 1839, he assumed charge of the office of Commissioner for the Suppression of Thuggee and Dacoity. Up to this date the office of Commissioner for the Suppression of Dacoity had been separate from that of General Superintendent of the measures for the Suppression of Thuggee, and had been filled by another officer, Mr. Hugh Fraser, of the Civil Service. During the next two years Sleeman passed much of his time in the North-Western Provinces, making Murādābād his headquarters, and thoroughly investigating the secret criminal organizations of Upper India.

In 1841 he was offered the coveted and lucrative post of Resident at Lucknow, vacant by the resignation of Colonel Low; but immediately after his resignation Colonel Low lost all his savings through the failure of his bankers, and Sleeman, moved by a generous impulse, wrote to Colonel Low, begging him to retain the appointment. During the troubles with Sindhia which culminated in the battle of Mahārājpur, fought on the 29th December, 1843, Sleeman was Resident at Gwālior, and was actually in Sindhia's camp when the battle unexpectedly began. In 1848 the Residency at Lucknow again fell vacant, and Lord Dalhousie, by a letter dated 16th September, offered Sleeman the appointment in the following terms:—

"The high reputation you have earned, your experience of civil administration, your knowledge of the people, and the qualifications

you possess as a public man, have led me to submit your name to the Council of India as an officer to whom I could commit this important charge with entire confidence that its duties would be well performed. I do myself, therefore, the honour of proposing to you to accept the office of Resident at Lucknow, with especial reference to the great changes which, in all probability, will take place. Retaining your superintendency of Thuggee affairs, it will be manifestly necessary that you should be relieved from the duty of the trials of Thugs usually condemned at Lucknow.

"In the hope that you will not withhold from the Government your services in the capacity I have named, and in the further hope of finding an opportunity of personally making your acquaintance,

"I have the honour to be,

"Dear Colonel Sleeman,

"Very faithfully yours,

"DALHOUSIE."

The remainder of Sleeman's official life was spent in Oudh, and was chiefly devoted to ceaseless and hopeless endeavours to reform the King's administration and relieve the sufferings of his grievously oppressed subjects. On the 1st of December, 1849, Sleeman began his memorable three months' tour through Oudh, which he has so vividly described in the special work devoted to the purpose. The awful revelations of the "Journey through the Kingdom of Oude" largely influenced Lord Dalhousie in forming his decision to annex the kingdom, though that decision was directly opposed to the advice of Sleeman, who consistently advocated reform of the administration, while deprecating annexation.

An attempt to assassinate the Resident, which was made in December, 1851, happily failed, and did not interrupt his labours for the benefit of the people.

In 1854 the long strain of forty-five years' service broke down Sleeman's strong constitution. He tried to regain

¹ This letter is printed in full in the "Journey through the Kingdom of Oude," pp. xvii-xix.

health by a visit to the hills, but this expedient proved ineffectual, and he was ordered home. On the 10th of February, 1856, while on his way home on board the *Monarch*, he died off Ceylon and was buried at sea, just four days after he had been granted the dignity of K.C.B.

Lord Dalhousie's desire to meet his trusted officer was never gratified. The following correspondence between the Governor-General and Sleeman, now published for the first time, is equally creditable to both parties :—

“BARRACKPORE PARK,
“January 9th, 1856.

“MY DEAR GENERAL SLEEMAN,

“I have heard to-day of your arrival in Calcutta, and have heard at the same time with sincere concern that you are still suffering in health. A desire to disturb you as little as possible induces me to have recourse to my pen, in order to convey to you a communication which I had hoped to be able to make in person.

“Some time since, when adjusting the details connected with my retirement from the Government of India, I solicited permission to recommend to Her Majesty's gracious consideration the names of some who seemed to me to be worthy of Her Majesty's favour. My request was moderate. I asked only to be allowed to submit the name of one officer from each Presidency. The name which is selected from the Bengal army was your own, and I ventured to express my hope that Her Majesty would be pleased to mark her sense of the long course of able, and honourable, and distinguished service through which you had passed, by conferring upon you the civil cross of a Knight Commander of the Bath.

“As yet no reply has been received to my letter. But as you have now arrived at the Presidency, I lose no time in making known to you what has been done; in the hope that you will receive it as a proof of the high estimation in which your services and character are held, as well by myself as by the entire community of India.

“I beg to remain,

“My dear General,

“Very truly yours,

“DALHOUSIE.”

Major-General Sleeman.

Reply to above. Dated 11th January, 1856.

“MY LORD,

“I was yesterday evening favoured with your Lordship’s most kind and flattering letter of the 9th instant from Barrackpore.

“I cannot adequately express how highly honoured I feel by the mention that you have been pleased to make of my services to Her Majesty the Queen, and how much gratified I am by this crowning act of kindness from your Lordship in addition to the many favours I have received at your hands during the last eight years ; and whether it may, or may not, be my fate to live long enough to see the honourable rank actually conferred upon me, which you have been so considerate and generous as to ask for me, the letter now received from your Lordship will of itself be deemed by my family as a substantial honour, and it will be preserved, I trust, by my son, with feelings of honest pride, at the thought that his father had merited such a mark of distinction from so eminent a statesman as the Marquis of Dalhousie.

“My right hand is so crippled by rheumatism that I am obliged to make use of an amanuensis to write this letter, and my bodily strength is so much reduced, that I cannot hope before embarking for England to pay my personal respects to your Lordship.

“Under these unfortunate circumstances, I now beg to take my leave of your Lordship ; to offer my unfeigned and anxious wishes for your Lordship’s health and happiness, and with every sentiment of respect and gratitude, to subscribe myself,

“Your Lordship’s most faithful and

“Obedient servant,

“W. H. SLEEMAN,

“Major-General.

“To the Most Noble

“The Marquis of Dalhousie, K.T.,

“Governor-General, &c., &c.,

“Calcutta.”

Sir William Sleeman was an accomplished Oriental linguist, well versed in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, and also possessed a good working knowledge of Latin, Greek, and French. His works afford many proofs of the keen interest which he took in the sciences of geology, agricultural chemistry, and political economy, and of his

intelligent appreciation of the lessons taught by history. Nor was he insensible to the charms of art, especially those of poetry. His favourite authors among the poets seem to have been Shakspeare, Milton, Scott, Wordsworth, and Cowper. His knowledge of the customs and modes of thought of the natives of India, which has rarely been equalled and never been surpassed, was more than half the secret of his notable success as an administrator. The greatest achievement of his unselfish and busy life was the suppression of the system of organized murder known as Thuggee, and in the execution of that prolonged and onerous task he displayed the most delicate tact, the keenest sagacity, and extraordinary power of organization. His own words are his best epitaph: "I have gone on quietly," he writes, "'through evil and through good report,' doing, to the best of my ability, the duties which it has pleased the Government of India, from time to time, to confide to me in the manner which appeared to me most conformable to its wishes and its honour, satisfied and grateful for the trust and confidence which enabled me to do so much good for the people, and to secure so much of their attachment and gratitude to their rulers."¹

¹ Letter to Lord Hardinge, dated Jhansee, 4th March, 1848, printed in "Journey through the Kingdom of Oude," vol. i, p. xxvii.

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OF THE

WRITINGS OF

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR W. H. SLEEMAN, K.C.B.

I.—PRINTED.

Letter addressed to Dr. Tytler, of Allahabad, by Lieut. W. H. Sleeman, August 20th, 1819.

(1.)
1819,
Pamphlet.

Copied from the *Asiatic Mirror* of September the 1st, 1819.

[This letter describes a great pestilence at Lucknow in 1818, and discusses the theory that cholera may be caused by "eating a certain kind of rice."]

Ramaseeana, or a Vocabulary of the Peculiar Language used by the Thugs, with an Introduction and Appendix descriptive of the system pursued by that fraternity, and of the measures which have been adopted by the Supreme Government of India for its suppression.

(2.)
Calcutta,
1836,
1 vol. 8vo.

Calcutta, G. H. Huttman, Military Orphan Press, 1836.

[No author's name on title-page, but most of the articles are signed by W. H. Sleeman.

The contents are :—

1. Preface	p.p. i-v
2. Table of Contents	p.p. 1, 2
3. Introduction	p.p. 3-66
4. The <i>Ramaseeana</i>	p.p. 67-140
5. Substance of conversations held by Captain Sleeman with different Thug approvers, while preparing the vocabulary	p.p. 141-270

Appendices A to Z, and A², containing correspondence and copious details of particular crimes, p.p. 1-515. Total pages (v, + 270 + 515) 790.

A very roughly compiled and coarsely printed collection of valuable documents.]

(3.)

On the Admission of Documentary Evidence.

(?) 1836 or
1837,
Pamphlet.*Extract.*

[This reprint is an extract from *Ramaseena*. The rules relating to the admission of evidence in criminal trials are discussed. 24 pages.]

(4.)

Copy of a Letter

1837,
Pamphlet.

which appeared in the *Calcutta Courier* of the 29th March, 1837, under the signature of "Hirtius," relative to the Intrigues of Jotha Ram.

[This letter deals with the intrigues and disturbances in the Jaipur (Jyepoor) State in 1835, and the murder of the Assistant to the Resident, Mr. Blake. (See *pos'*, vol. ii, p. 160.) The reprint is a pamphlet of sixteen pages. At the beginning reference is made to a previous letter by the author on the same subject, which had been inserted in the *Calcutta Courier* in November, 1836.]

(5.)

"History of the Gurha Mundala Rajas," by Captain W. H.

Journal of
Asiatic
Society
of Bengal,
vol. vi.
(1837), p. 621.

Sleeman.

[An elaborate history of the Gond dynasty of Garhā Mandlā, "which is believed to be founded principally on the chronicles of the Bājpai family, who were the hereditary prime ministers of the Gond princes." (*Central Provinces Gazetteer*, p. 282, note.) The history is, therefore, subject to the doubts which necessarily attach to all Indian family traditions.]

(7.)

Calcutta
(Seram-
pore), 1839,
8vo.

A

REPORT

on

THE SYSTEM OF

MEGPUNNAISM,

or

The Murder of Indigent Parents for their Young Children (who are sold as Slaves) as it prevails in the Delhi Territories, and the Native States of Rajpootana, Ulwar, and Bhurtpore.

By Major W. H. Sleeman.

From the Serampore Press.

1839.

[Thin 8vo, p.p. iv and 121. Title and Index, p.p. i-iv; Introduction, p.p. 1-16; Substance of Conversations with some members of the gangs held by Lieutenant Charles Mills, p.p. 17-25; A brief

account of some of the most prominent cases that have come to our knowledge, depositions, and lists of members of the gangs, p.p. 25-121.

A very curious and valuable account of a little known variety of Thuggee, which may possibly still be practised.]

REPORT
ON THE DEPREDACTIONS
COMMITTED BY
THE THUG GANGS

of

UPPER AND CENTRAL INDIA,

From the

Cold Season of 1836-37, down to their Gradual Suppression, under the operation of the measures adopted against them by the Supreme Government in the year 1839.

By Major Sleeman,

Commissioner for the Suppression of Thuggee and Dacoities.

Calcutta :

G. H. Huttmann, Bengal Military Orphan Press.

1840.

[Thick 8vo, p.p. lviii, 549 and xxvi. Title, Contents and Preface, p.p. i-xxiv; Introduction, including Memorandum on River Thuggee in Bengal, by Captain N. Lewis, p.p. xxv-lviii; Text, giving very full details, with a Map and Tabular Statements, p.p. 1-549; Index, including names of Thugs, p.p. i-xxvi.

The information recorded is similar to that given in the earlier *Ramaseena* volume. This is the only work by Sleeman which has an alphabetical index.]

On the
SPIRIT OF MILITARY DISCIPLINE
in our
NATIVE INDIAN ARMY.

By Major N. [sic] H. Sleeman, Bengal Native Infantry.

“Europæque succumbuit Asia.”

“The misfortune of all history is, that while the motives of a few princes and leaders in their various projects of ambition are detailed

(7.)

Calcutta,
1840,
8vo.

(8.)

Calcutta,
1841,
8vo.

with accuracy, the motives which crowd their standards with military followers are totally overlooked.”—*Malthus*.

Calcutta :

Bishop's College Press.

M. DCCC. XLI.

[Thin 8vo. Introduction, p.p. i-xiii; On the Spirit of Military Discipline in the Native Army of India, p.p. 1-59; page 60 blank; Invalid Establishment, p.p. 61-84. The text of these two essays is reprinted as chapters xxviii and xxix of vol. ii of “Rambles and Recollections” in the original edition, corresponding to chapters xxi and xxii of this edition, and most of the observations in the Introduction are utilized in various places in that work. The author's remark in the Introduction to these essays—“They may never be published, but I cannot deny myself the gratification of printing them”—indicates that, though printed, they were never published in their separate form. The only copy of the separately printed tract which I have seen is that in the India Office Library.]

(9.)

1841,
Pamphlet.

MAJOR SLEEMAN

on the

PUBLIC SPIRIT OF THE HINDOOS.

From the Transactions of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society, vol. viii.

Art. XXII. *Public Spirit among the Hin loo Race as indicated in the flourishing condition of the Jubbulpore District in former times, with a sketch of its present state: also on the great importance of attending to Tree Cultivation and suggestions for extending it. By Major Sleeman, late in charge of the Jubbulpore District.*

[Read at the Meeting of the Society on the 8th Sept., 1841.]

[This reprint is a pamphlet of eight pages. The text was again reprinted verbatim as chapter xiv of vol. ii of the “Rambles and Recollections” in the original edition, corresponding to chapter vii of this edition. No contributions by the author of later date than the above to any periodical have been traced. In a letter dated Lucknow, 12th January, 1853 (*Journey*, vol. ii, p. 390) the author says—“I was asked by Dr. Duff, the editor of the *Calcutta Review*, before he went home, to write some articles for that journal, to expose the fallacies, and to counteract the influences of this [*scil.* annexationist] school; but I have for many years ceased to contribute to the periodical papers, and have felt bound by my position not to write for them.”]

RAMBLES AND RECOLLECTIONS

OF AN INDIAN OFFICIAL,

by

Lieutenant-Colonel W. H. Sleeman, of the Bengal Army.

“The proper study of mankind is man.”—POPE.

In Two Volumes.

London :

J. Hatchard and Son, 187, Piccadilly.

1844.

[Vol. i, p.p. v and 478. Frontispiece, in colours, a portrait of “The late Emperor of Delhi,” namely, Akbar II. At end of volume, six full-page coloured plates, numbered 25–30, viz., No. 25, “Plant”; No. 26, “Plant”; No. 27, “Plant”; No. 28, “Ornament”; No. 29, “Ornament”; No. 30, “Ornaments”.]

Vol. ii, p.p. vii and 459. Frontispiece, in colours, comprising five miniatures; and Plates numbered 1–24, irregularly inserted, and with several misprints in the titles.

The three notes printed at the close of the second volume have been in the present edition brought up to their proper places. The following paragraph is prefixed to these notes in the original edition :—“In consequence of this work not having had the advantage of the author’s superintendence while passing through the press, and of the manuscript having reached England in insulated portions, some errors and omissions have unavoidably taken place, a few of which the following notes are intended to rectify or supply.”]

RAMBLES AND RECOLLECTIONS, etc.

(Title as in edition of 1844.)

Republished by A. C. Majumdar.

Lahore :

Printed at the Mufid-i-am Press.

1888.

[Vol. i, p.p. xi and 351. Vol. ii, p.p. v and 339. A very roughly executed reprint, containing many misprints. No illustrations.]

(10.)

London,
1844,
2 vols. 8vo.

(10a.)

Lahore,
1888,
2 vols. in
one, 8vo.

(11.)
Calcutta,
1849.

REPORT
on
BUDHUK
alias
BAGREE DECOITS
and other
GANG ROBBERS BY HEREDITARY PROFESSION,
and on
The Measures adopted by the Government of India
for their Suppression.

By
Lieut.-Col. W. H. Sleeman, Bengal Army.

Calcutta :
J. C. Sherriff, Bengal Military Orphan Press.
1849.

[Folio, p.p. iv and 433. Map. Title, errata, and contents, p.p. i-iv. Forwarding letter from Colonel Sleeman, p.p. 1-3 ; chapters i-xiv, p.p. 4-374 ; Appendix, p.p. 375-433. Printed on blue paper. A very valuable work. In their Despatch No. 27₁ dated 18th September, 1850, the Honourable Court of Directors observe that " This Report is as important and interesting as that of the same able officer on the Thugs."]

(12.)
1852,
Plymouth,
Pamphlet.

AN ACCOUNT
of
WOLVES NURTURING CHILDREN
IN THEIR DENS.

By an Indian Official.

Plymouth :
Jenkin Thomas, Printer,
9, Cornwall Street.

1852.

[Octavo pamphlet. 15 pages. The cases cited are also described in the "Journey through the Kingdom of Oude." Mr. V. Bali, C.B., F.R.S., has discussed them in his *Jungle Life in India*.]

Sir William Sleeman printed his "Diary of a Journey through Oude" privately at a press in the Residency. He had purchased a small press and type for the purpose of printing it at his own house, so that no one but himself and the compositor might see it. He intended, if he could find time, to give the history of the reigning family in a third volume, which was written, but has never been published.

(13.)
Lucknow,
1852.

Eighteen copies of the Diary were printed at the private Residency press, and were coarsely bound by a local binder. Of these copies some were distributed as follows :—

Government, Calcutta	1
Court of Directors	1
Governor-General	1
Chairman of Court of Directors	1
Deputy Chairman	1
Brother of author	1
Five children of author, one each	5
Col. Sykes, Director E.I.C.	1

—
12

A Memorandum of Errata was put up along with some of the copies distributed. (*Private Correspondence*, Journey, vol. ii, p.p. 357, 393, under dates 4 April, 1852, and 12 Jan., 1853.) The editor has failed to trace any copy of this curious edition.

Reprint of letter No. 34 of 1853 from the author to J. P. Grant, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

(14.)
1853,
Pamphlet.

Fort William,

Dated Lucknow Residency,

12th October, 1853.

[Six pages. Describes an attempt to assassinate the author on the 9th October, 1853. See *ante*, p. xxv.]

A Journey through the Kingdom of Oude, in 1849–1850, by direction of the Right Hon. the Earl of Dalhousie, Governor-General.

(15.)
London,
1858,
2 vols. 8vo.

With Private Correspondence relative to the Annexation of Oude to British India, &c.

By Major-General Sir W. H. Sleeman, K.C.B., Resident at the Court of Lucknow.

In two Volumes.

London:

Richard Bentley, Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty. 1858.

[Small 8vo. Frontispiece of vol. i is a Map of the Kingdom of Oude. The contents of vol. i are :—Title, preface, and contents, p.p. i-x; Biographical Sketch of Major-General Sir W. H. Sleeman, K.C.B., p.p. xi-xvi; Introduction, p.p. xvii-xxii; Private Correspondence preceding the Journey through the Kingdom of Oude, p.p. xxiii-lxxx; Diary of a Tour through Oude, chapters i-vi, p.p. 1-337. The contents of vol. ii are :—Title and contents, p.p. i-vi; Diary of a Tour through Oude, p.p. 1-331; Private Correspondence relating to the Annexation of the Kingdom of Oude to British India, p.p. 332-424. The letters printed in this volume were written between 5th Dec., 1849, and 11th Sept., 1854, during and after the Tour. The dates of the letters in the first volume extend from 20 Feb., 1848, to 11th Oct., 1849. The Tour began on 1st Dec., 1849.]

II.—UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS.

- (1.)
1809. Two books describing author's voyage to India round the Cape.
- (2.)
1837. Journal of a Trip from Simla to Gurgoohee.
[Referred to in unpublished letters dated 5th and 30th August, 1837.]
- (3.)
Circa 1824. Preliminary Observations and Notes on Mr. Molony's Report on Narsinghpur.
[Referred to in *Central Provinces Gazetteer*, Nāgpur, 1870, pages xcix, cli, etc. The papers seem to be preserved in the record room at Narsinghpur.]
- (4.)
1841. History of Byza Bae (Baiza Bāi).
[Not to be published till after author's death. See unpublished letter dated Jhānsī, Oct. 22nd, 1841.]
- (5.) History of the Reigning Family of Oude.
[Intended to form a third volume of the "Journey." See *Author's letter to Sir James Weir Hogg, Deputy Chairman, India House*, dated Lucknow, 4th April, 1852; printed in *Journey*, vol. ii, p. 358.]

The manuscripts Nos. 1, 2, 4, and 5, and the printed papers Nos. 3, 4, 9, 12, and 14 are in the possession of Captain H. A. Sleeman, son of the author. The India Office Library possesses copies of the printed works Nos. 2, 6, 7, 8, 10a, 11, and 15.

RAMBLES AND RECOLLECTIONS

CHAPTER I

Annual Fairs held upon the Banks of Sacred Streams in India.

BEFORE setting out on our journey towards the Himālaya we formed once more an agreeable party to visit the Marble Rocks of the Nerbudda at Bherāghāt.¹ It was the end of Kārtik,² when the Hindoos hold fairs on all their sacred streams at places consecrated by poetry or tradition as the scene of some divine work or manifestation. These fairs are at once festive and holy; every person who comes enjoying himself as much as he can, and at the same time seeking purification from all past transgressions by bathing and praying in the holy stream, and making laudable resolutions to be better for the future. The ceremonies last five days, and take place at the same time upon all the sacred rivers throughout India; and the greater part of the whole Hindoo population, from the summits of the Himā-

¹ The Nerbudda (Narbadā, or Narmadā) river is the boundary between Hindustan, or Northern India, and the Deccan (Dakhin), or Southern India. The beautiful gorge of the Marble Rocks, near Jubbulpore (Jabalpur), is familiar to modern tourists. The remarkable antiquities at Bherāghāt are fully described and illustrated in the *Reports of the Archaeological Survey of India* (Cunningham), vol. ix, p.p. 60-76, Plates xii-xvi.

² The eighth month of the Hindoo luni-solar year, corresponding to part of October and part of November. In Northern India the year begins with the month Chait, in March. The most commonly used names of the months are:—(1) Chait; (2) Baisākh; (3) Jēth; (4) Asārh; (5) Sāwan; (6) Bhādon; (7) Kuār; (8) Kārtik; (9) Aghan; (10) Pūs; (11) Māgh; and (12) Phālgun.

laya mountains to Cape Comōrin, will, I believe, during these five days, be found congregated at these fairs. In sailing down the Ganges one may pass in the course of a day half a dozen such fairs, each with a multitude equal to the population of a large city, and rendered beautifully picturesque by the magnificence and variety of the tent equipages of the great and wealthy. The preserver of the universe (*Bhagvān*) Vishnu is supposed, on the 26th of *Asārḥ*, to descend to the world below (*Pātāl*) to defend *Rājā Bali* from the attacks of *Indra*, to stay with him four months, and to come up again on the 26th *Kārtik*.¹ During his absence almost all kinds of worship and festivities are suspended; and they recommence at these fairs, where people assemble to hail his resurrection.

Our tents were pitched upon a green sward on one bank of a small stream running into the Nerbudda close by, while the multitude occupied the other bank. At night all the tents and booths are illuminated, and the scene is hardly less animated by night than by day; but what strikes an European most is the entire absence of all tumult and disorder at such places. He not only sees no disturbance, but feels assured that there will be none; and leaves his wife and children in the midst of a crowd of a hundred thousand persons all strangers to them, and all speaking a language and following a religion different from theirs, while he goes off the whole day, hunting and shooting in the distant jungles, without the slightest feeling of apprehension for their safety or comfort. It is a singular fact, which I know to be true, that during the great mutiny of our native troops at Barrackpore in 1824, the chief leaders bound themselves by a solemn oath not to suffer any European lady or child to be injured or molested, happen what might

¹ *Bhagvān* is often used as equivalent for the word God in its most general sense, but is specially applicable to the Deity as manifested in Vishnu the Preserver. *Asārḥ* corresponds to June-July. *Pātāl* is the Hindoo Hades. *Rājā Bali* is a demon, and *Indra* is the lord of the heavens. The fairs take place at the time of full moon.

to them in the collision with their officers and the government. My friend Captain Reid, one of the general staff, used to allow his children, five in number, to go into the lines and play with the soldiers of the mutinous regiments up to the very day when the artillery opened upon them ; and, of above thirty European ladies then at the station, not one thought of leaving the place till they heard the guns.¹ Mrs. Colonel Faithful, with her daughter and another young lady, who had both just arrived from England, went lately all the way from Calcutta to Lūdiāna on the banks of the Hyphasis, a distance of more than twelve hundred miles, in their palankeens with relays of bearers, and without even a servant to attend them.² They were travelling night and day for fourteen days without the slightest apprehension of injury or of insult. Cases of ladies travelling in the same manner by *dāk* (stages) immediately after their arrival from England to all parts of the country occur every day, and I know of no instance of injury or insult sustained by them.³ Does not this speak volumes for the character of our rule in India? Would men trust their wives and daughters in this manner unprotected among a people that disliked them and their rule? We have not a garrison, or walled cantonments, or fortified position of any kind for our residence from one end of our Eastern empire to the other, save at the three capitals of

¹ Barrackpore, sixteen miles north of Calcutta, is still a cantonment. The Governor-General has a country house there. The mutiny of the native troops stationed there occurred on the 1st Nov., 1824, and was due to the discontent caused by orders moving the 47th Native Infantry to Rangoon to take part in the Burmese war. The outbreak was promptly suppressed. Captain Pogson published a *Memoir of the Mutiny at Barrackpore* (8vo., Serampore, 1833).

² Lūdiāna, the capital of the district of the same name, now under the Punjāb Government. Hyphasis is the Greek name of the Biās river, one of the five rivers of the Punjāb.

³ Railways have rendered almost obsolete the mode of travelling described in the text. In Northern India even the natives now rarely use palankeens (*pālakis*), except for purposes of ceremony.

Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay.¹ We know and feel that the people everywhere look up to and respect us, in spite of all our faults, and we like to let them know and feel that we have confidence in them.

Sir Thomas Munro has justly observed, "I do not exactly know what is meant by civilizing the people of India. In the theory and practice of good government they may be deficient ; but, if a good system of agriculture, if unrivalled manufactures, if the establishment of schools for reading and writing, if the general practice of kindness and hospitality, and, above all, if a scrupulous respect and delicacy towards the female sex are amongst the points that denote a civilized people ; then the Hindoos are not inferior in civilization to the people of Europe."²

The Bishop Heber writes in the same favourable terms of the Hindoos in the narrative of his journey through India ; and where shall we find a mind more capable of judging of the merits and demerits of a people than his ?³

The concourse of people at this fair was, as usual, immense ; but a great many who could not afford to provide tents for the accommodation of their families were driven away before their time by some heavy showers of, to them, unseasonable rains. On this and similar occasions the people bathe in the Nerbudda without the aid of priests, but a number of poor Brahmans attend at these festivals to receive charity, though not to assist at the ceremonies. Those who could afford it gave a trifle to these men as they came out of the sacred stream, but in no case was it

¹ This statement is no longer quite accurate, though fortified positions are still very few.

² The editor cannot find the exact passage quoted, but remarks to the same effect will be found in *The Life of Sir Thomas Munro*, by the Rev. G. R. Gleig, in two volumes, a new edition, London, 1831, vol. ii., p. 175.

³ *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India, from Calcutta to Bombay, 1824-5, and a Journey to the Southern Provinces in 1826*, 2nd edition, 3 vols. 8vo., London, 1828.

demand, or even solicited with any appearance of importunity, as it commonly is at fairs and holy places on the Ganges. The first day, the people bathe below the rapid over which the river falls after it emerges from its peaceful abode among the marble rocks; on the second day, just above this rapid; and on the third day, two miles further up at the cascade, when the whole body of the limpid stream of the Nerbudda, confined to a narrow channel of only a few yards wide, falls tumultuously down in a beautiful cascade into a deep chasm of marble rocks. This fall of their sacred stream the people call the "Dhuāndhār," or "the smoky fall," from the thick vapour which is always seen rising from it in the morning. From below, the river glides quietly and imperceptibly for a mile and a half along a deep, and, according to popular belief, a fathomless channel of from ten to fifty yards wide, with snow-white marble rocks rising perpendicularly on either side from a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet high, and in some parts fearfully overhanging. Suspended in recesses of these white rocks are numerous large black nests of hornets ready to descend upon any unlucky wight who may venture to disturb their repose;¹ and, as the boats of the curious European visitors pass up and down to the sound of music, clouds of wild pigeons rise from each side, and seem sometimes to fill the air above them. Here, according to native legends, repose the Pāndavas, the heroes of their great Homeric poem, the Mahābhārata, whose names they have transferred to the valley of the Nerbudda. Every fantastic appearance of the rocks, caused by those great convulsions of nature which have so much disturbed the crust of the globe, or by the slow and silent working of the waters, is attributed to the god-like power of those great heroes of Indian romance, and is associated with the

¹ The bees at the Marble Rocks are the *Apis dorsata*. An Englishman named Biddington, when trying to escape from them was drowned; and they stung to death one of Captain Forsyth's baggage ponies. (Balfour's *Cyclopædia of India*, 3rd ed. s.v. "Bee.")

recollection of scenes in which they are supposed to have figured.¹

The strata of the Kaimūr range of sandstone hills, which runs diagonally across the valley of the Nerbudda, are thrown up almost perpendicularly, in some places many hundred feet above the level of the plain, while in others for many miles together their tops are only visible above the surface. These are so many strings of the oxen which the arrows of Arjun, one of the five brothers, converted into stone ; and many a stream which now waters the valley first sprang from the surface of the earth at the touch of his lance, as his troops wanted water. The image of the gods of a former day, which now lie scattered among the ruins of old cities, buried in the depth of the forest, are nothing less than the bodies of the kings of the earth turned into stone for their temerity in contending with these demigods in battle. Ponds among the rocks of the Nerbudda, where all the great fairs are held, still bear the names of the five brothers, who are the heroes of this great poem ;² and they are every year visited by hundreds of thousands who implicitly believe that their waters once received upon their bosoms the wearied limbs of those whose names they bear. What is life without the charms of fiction, and without the leisure and recreations which these sacred imaginings tend to give to the great mass of those who have nothing but the labour of their hands to depend upon for their subsistence ! Let no such fictions

¹ The vast epic poem, or collection of poems, known as the *Mahābhārata*, consists of about 24,000 Sanskrit verses. The main subject is the war between the five Pāndavas, or sons of Pandū, and their cousins the Kauravas, sons of Dhritarāshtra. Many poems of various origins and dates are interwoven with the main work. The best known of the episodes is that of *Nala and Damayantī*, which was well translated by Dean Milman. A very full analysis of the *Mahābhārata* will be found in Wheeler's *History of India*.

² The five Pāndava brothers were Yudhishtira, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva, the children of Pāndu, and his wives Kuntī, or Prithā, and Madrī.

be believed, and the holidays and pastimes of the lower orders in every country would soon cease, for they have almost everywhere owed their origin and support to some religious dream which has commanded the faith and influenced the conduct of great masses of mankind, and prevented one man from presuming to work on the day that another wished to rest from his labours. The people were of opinion, they told me, that the Ganges, as a sacred stream, could last only sixty years more, when the Nerbudda would take its place. The waters of the Nerbudda are, they say, already so much more sacred than those of the Ganges that to see them is sufficient to cleanse men from their sins, whereas the Ganges must be touched before it can have that effect.¹

At the temple built on the top of a conical hill at Bherāghāt, overlooking the river, is a statue of a bull carrying Siva, the god of destruction, and his wife Pārvati seated behind him; they have both snakes in their hands, and Siva has a large one round his loins as a waistband. There are several demons in human shape lying prostrate under the belly of the bull, and the whole are well cut out of one large slab of hard basalt from a dyke in the marble rock beneath. They call the whole group "Gauri Sankar," and I found in the fair, exposed for sale, a brass model of a similar one from Jeypore (Jaipur), but not so well shaped and proportioned. On noticing this we were told that "such difference was to be expected, since the brass must have been made by man, whereas the 'Gauri Sankar' of the temple above was a real *Py-Khan*,² or a conversion of living beings into stone by the gods;

¹ "The Narbadā has its special admirers, who exalt it even above the Ganges. . . . The sanctity of the Ganges will, they say, cease in 1895, whereas that of the Narbadā will continue for ever." (Monier Williams, *Religious Thought and Life in India*, London, 1883, p. 348). See *post*, ch. xxvii.

² This strange-looking word *Py-Khan* seems to be intended for the Hindi "pekhan," or "pekhnā," meaning "a puppet-show" or "raree-show" (Fallon's *Hindustānī Dictionary*).

they were therefore the exact resemblance of living beings, while the others could only be rude imitations." "Gaurī," or the Fair, is the name of Pārvatī, or Dēvī, when she appears with her husband Siva. On such occasions she is always fair and beautiful. Sankar is another name of Siva, or Mahādēo, or Rudra. On looking into the temple at the statue, a lady expressed her surprise at the entireness as well as the excellence of the figures, while all round had been so much mutilated by the Muhammadans. "They are quite a different thing from the others," said a respectable old landholder; "they are a conversion of real flesh and blood into stone, and no human hands can either imitate or hurt them." She smiled incredulously, while he looked very grave, and appealed to the whole crowd of spectators assembled, who all testified to the truth of what he had said; and added that "at no distant day the figures would be all restored to life again; the deities would all come back without doubt and reanimate their old bodies again."

All the people who come to bathe at the fair bring chaplets of yellow jasmine, and hang them as offerings round the necks of the god and his consort; and at the same time they make some small offerings of rice to each of the many images that stand within the same apartment, and also to those which, under a stone roof supported upon stone pillars, line the inside of the wall that surrounds the circular area, in the centre of which the temple stands. The images inside the temple are those of the three great gods, Brahmā, Vishnu, and Siva, with their primæval consorts;¹ but those that occupy the piazza outside are the representations of the consorts of the different incarnations of these three gods, and these consorts are themselves the incarnations of the primæval wives, who followed their husbands in all their earthly ramblings.

¹ Sarasvatī, consort of Brahmā; Dēvī (Pārvatī, Durgā, etc.), consort of Siva; and Lakshmī, consort of Vishnu. All Hindoo deities have many names.

They have all the female form, and are about the size of ordinary women, and extremely well cut out of fine white and green sandstone; but their heads are those of the animals in which their respective husbands became incarnate, such as the lion, the elephant, &c., or those of the "*vāhans*," or animals on which they rode, such as the bull, the swan, the eagle, &c. But these, I presume, are mere *capricios* of the founder of the temple. The figures are sixty-four in number, all mounted upon their respective "*vāhans*," but have been sadly mutilated by the pious Muhammadans.¹

The old "Mahant," or high priest, told us that Mahādēo and his wife were in reality our Adam and Eve; "they came here together," said he, "on a visit to the mountain Kailās,² and being earnestly solicited to leave some memorial of their visit, got themselves turned into stone." The popular belief is that some very holy man, who had been occupied on the top of this little conical hill, where the temple now stands, in austere devotions for some few thousand years, was at last honoured with a visit from Siva and his consort, who asked him what they could do for him. He begged them to wait till he should bring some flowers from the woods to make them a suitable offering. They promised to do so, and he ran down, plunged into the Nerbudda and drowned himself, in order that these august persons might for ever remain and do honour to his residence and his name. They, however, left only their "mortal coil," but will one day return and resume it.

¹ The author's explanation is partly erroneous. The temple, which is a very remarkable one, is dedicated to the sixty-four Joginis. Only five temples in India are known to be dedicated to these demons. For details see Cunningham, *Archæol. Survey Reports*, vol. ix, p. p. 61-74, pl. xii-xvi; vol. ii, p. 416; and vol. xxi, p. 57. The word *vāhana* means "vehicle." Each deity has his peculiar vehicle.

² The heaven of Siva, as distinguished from Vaikuntha, the heaven of Vishnu. It is supposed to be somewhere in the Himālaya mountains. The wonderful excavated rock temple at Ellora is believed to be a model of Kailās.

I know not whether I am singular in the notion or not, but I think Mahādēo and his consort are really our Adam and Eve, and that the people have converted them into the god and goddess of destruction, from some vague idea of their original sin, which involved all their race in destruction. The snakes, which form the only dress of Mahādēo, would seem to confirm this notion.¹

¹ This "notion" of the author's is not likely to find acceptance at the present day.



CHAPTER II

Hindoo System of Religion.

THE Hindoo system is this. A great divine spirit or essence, "Brahma," pervades the whole universe ; and the soul of every human being is a drop from this great ocean, to which, when it becomes perfectly purified, it is reunited. The reunion is the eternal beatitude to which all look forward with hope ; and the soul of the Brahman is nearest to it. If he has been a good man, his soul becomes absorbed in the "Brahma" ; and, if a bad man, it goes to "Narak," hell ; and after the expiration of its period there of *limited imprisonment*, it returns to earth, and occupies the body of some other animal. It again advances by degrees to the body of the Brahman ; and thence, when fitted for it, into the great "Brahma."¹

From this great eternal essence emanate Brahmā, the Creator, whose consort is Sarasvatī ;² Vishnu, the Preserver, whose consort is Lakshmī ; and Siva, *alias* Mahādēo, the

¹ Men are occasionally exempted from the necessity of becoming a Brahman first. Men of low caste, if they die at particular places, where it is the interest of the Brahmans to invite rich men to die, are promised absorption into the great "Brahma" at once. Immense numbers of wealthy men go every year from the most distant parts of India to die at Benares, where they spend large sums of money among the Brahmans. It is by their means that this, the second city in India, is supported. [W. H. S.]

² Brahmā, with the short vowel, is the eternal Essence or Spirit ; Brahmā, with the long vowel, is "the primæval male god, the first personal product of the purely spiritual Brahman, when overspread by Māyā, or illusory creative force," according to the Vedānta system. (Monier Williams, *Religious Thought and Life in India*, p. 44.)

Destroyer, whose consort is Pārvati. According to popular belief Jamrāj (Yamarāja) is the judicial deity who has been appointed by the greater powers to pass the final judgment on the tenor of men's lives, according to proceedings drawn up by his secretary Chitragupta. If men's actions have been good, their souls are, as the next stage, advanced a step towards the great essence, Brahma; and, if bad, they are thrown back, and obliged to occupy the bodies of brutes or of people of inferior caste, as the balance against them may be great or small. There is an intermediate stage, a "Narak," or hell, for bad men, and a "Baikunth," or paradise, for the good, in which they find their felicity in serving that god of the three to which they have specially devoted themselves while on earth. But from this stage, after the period of their sentence is expired, men go back to their pilgrimage on earth again.

There are numerous Dēos (Devas), or good spirits, of whom Indra is the chief;¹ and Daityas, or bad spirits; and there have also been a great number of incarnations from the three great gods, and their consorts, who have made their appearance upon the earth when required for particular purposes. All these incarnations are called "Avatārs," or descents. Vishnu has been eleven times on the globe in different shapes, and Siva seven times.² The avatārs of Vishnu are celebrated in many popular poems, such as the Rāmāyana, or history of the Rape of Sītā, the wife of Rāma, the seventh incarnation;³ the Mahā-

¹ Indra was originally, in the Vedās, the Rain-god. The statement in the text refers to modern Hinduism.

² The incarnations of Vishnu are ordinarily reckoned as ten, namely, (1) Fish, (2) Tortoise, (3) Boar, (4) Man-lion, (5) Dwarf, (6) Rāma with the axe, (7) Rāma Chandra, (8) Krishna, (9) Buddha, (10) Kalki, or Kalkin, who is yet to come. I know of no authority for eleven incarnations of Vishnu. The number is stated in some Purānas as twenty-two, twenty-four, or even twenty-eight. Seven incarnations of Siva are not generally recognized. (See Monier Williams, *Religious Thought and Life in India*, p.p. 78-85, and 107-116.)

³ Sītā was an incarnation of Lakshmī. She became incarnate again, many centuries afterwards, as the wife of Kṛṣṇa, another

bhārata, and the Bhāgavata [Purāna], which describe the wars and amours of this god in his last human shape.¹ All these books are believed to have been written either by the hand or by the inspiration of the god himself thousands of years before the events they describe actually took place. "It was," they say, "as easy for the deity to write or dictate a battle, an *amour*, or any other important event ten thousand years before as the day after it took place"; and I believe nine-tenths, perhaps ninety-nine in a hundred, of the Hindoo population believe implicitly that these accounts were also written. It is now pretty clear that all these works are of comparatively recent date, that the great poem of the Mahābhārata could not have been written before the year 786 of the Christian era, and was probably written so late as A.D. 1157; that Krishna, *if born at all*, must have been born on the 7th of August, A.D. 600, but was most likely a mere creation of the imagination to serve the purpose of the Brahmans of Ujain, in whom the fiction originated; that the other incarnations were invented about the same time, and for the same object, though the other persons described as incarnations were real princes, Parasu Rāma, before Christ 1176, and Rāma, born before Christ 961. In the Mahābhārata Krishna is described as fighting in the same army with Yudhishtira and his four brothers. Yudhishtira was a real person, who ascended the throne at Delhi 575 B.C., or 1175 years before the birth of Krishna.²

incarnation of Vishnu [W. H. S.]. Reckoning by centuries is, of course, inapplicable to pure myth. The author believed in Bentley's baseless chronology.

¹ For the Mahābhārata, see *ante*, note 1, p. 6. The Bhāgavata Purāna is the most popular of the Purānas. Its Hindī version is known as the "Prem Sāgar." The date of the composition of the Purānas is very uncertain.

² The dates given in this passage are purely imaginary. Parts of the Mahābhārata are very ancient. Yudhishtira is no more an historical personage than Achilles or Romulus. It is very improbable that "throne of Delhi" existed in B.C. 575, and nothing whatever is known about the state of India at that date.

Bentley supposes that the incarnations, particularly that of Krishna, were invented by the Brahmans of Ujain with a view to check the progress of Christianity in that part of the world. (See his historical view of the Hindoo astronomy.) That we find in no history any account of the alarming progress of Christianity about the time these fables were written is no proof that Bentley was wrong.¹

When Monsieur Thevenot was at Agra [in] 1666, the Christian population was roughly estimated at twenty-five thousand families. They had all passed away before it became one of our civil and military stations in the beginning of the present century, and we might search history in vain for any mention of them. (See his Travels in India, part three.) One single prince, well disposed to give Christians encouragement and employment might, in a few years, get the same number around his capital; and it is probable that the early Christians in India occasionally found such princes, and gave just cause of alarm to the Brahman priests who were then in the infancy of their despotic power.²

During the war with Nepāl, in 1814 and 1815,³ the division with which I served came upon an extremely interesting colony of about two thousand Christian families at Betiyā in the Tīrhūt District, on the borders of the Tarāi forest. This colony had been created by one man, the Bishop, a Venetian by birth, under the protection of a

¹ It is hardly necessary to observe that this grotesque theory is utterly at variance with the facts, as now known.

² The existing settlements of native Christians at Agra are mostly of modern origin. Very ancient Christian communities exist near Madras, and on the Malabar coast. The travels of Jean de Thevenot were published in 1684, under the title of *Voyage contenant la Relation de l'Indostan*, and have been translated into English. Thevenot's statement about the Christians of Agra is further discussed *post* in Chapter LII.

³ The war with Nepāl began in October 1814, and was not concluded till 1816. During its progress the British arms suffered several reverses.

small Hindoo prince, the Rājā of Betiyā. This holy man had been some fifty years among these people, with little or no support from Europe or from any other quarter. The only aid he got from the Rājā was a pledge that no member of his church should be subject to the *Purveyance system*, under which the people everywhere suffered so much;¹ and this pledge the Rājā, though a Hindoo, had never suffered to be violated. There were men of all trades among them, and they formed one very large street remarkable for the superior style of its buildings and the sober industry of its inhabitants. The masons, carpenters, and blacksmiths of this little colony were working in our camp every day, while we remained in the vicinity, and better workmen I have never seen in India; but they would all insist upon going to divine service at the prescribed hours. They had built a splendid *pucka*² dwelling-house for their bishop, and a still more splendid church, and formed for him the finest garden I have seen in India, surrounded with a good wall, and provided with admirable *pucka* wells. The native Christian servants who attended at the old bishop's table, taught by himself, spoke Latin to him; but he was become very feeble, and spoke himself a mixture of Latin, Italian, his native tongue, and Hindustānī. We used to have him at our messes, and take as much care of him as of an infant; for he was become almost as frail as one. The joy and the excitement of being once more among Europeans, and treated by them with so much reverence in the midst of his flock, were perhaps too much for him, for he sickened and died soon after.

The Rājā died soon after him, and in all probability the flock has disappeared. No Europeans except a few indigo planters of the neighbourhood had ever before known or heard of this colony; and they seemed to consider them

¹ For discussion of this system see Chapter VII, *post*.

² "Pucka" (*pakkā*) here means "masonry," as opposed to "Kutchā" (*Kachchhū*), meaning "earthen."

only as a set of great scoundrels, who had better carts and bullocks than anybody else in the country, which they refused to let out at the same rate as the others, and which they (the indigo lords) were not permitted to seize and employ *at discretion*. Roman Catholics have a greater facility in making converts in India than Protestants, from having so much more in their form of worship to win the affections through the medium of the imagination.¹

¹ "Native Christians, according to the census of 1872, number 1,214 persons, who are principally found in Bettīā thāna [police-circle]. There are two Missions, one at Bettīā, and the other at the village of Chuhārī, both supported by the Roman Catholic church. The former was founded in 1746 by a certain Father Joseph, from Garingano in Italy, who went to Bettīā on the invitation of the Mahārāja. The present number of converts is about 1,000 persons. Being principally descendants of Brahmans, they hold a fair social position; but some of them are extremely poor. About one-fourth are carpenters, one-tenth blacksmiths, one-tenth servants, the remainder carters. The Chuhārī Mission was founded in 1770 by three Catholic priests, who had been expelled from Nepāl. There are now 283 converts, mostly descendants of Nepālīs. They are all agriculturists, and very poor." (Article "Champāran District" in *Statistical Account of Bengal*, 1877.)

CHAPTER III

Legend of the Nerbudda River.

THE legend is that the Nerbudda which flows west into the Gulf of Cambay was wooed and won in the usual way by the Son river, which rises from the same table-land of Amarkantak, and flows east into the Ganges and Bay of Bengal.¹ All the previous ceremonies having been performed, the Son² came with "due pomp and circumstance" to fetch his bride in the procession called the "Barāt," up to which time the bride and bridegroom are supposed never to have seen each other, unless perchance they have met in infancy. Her majesty the Nerbudda became exceedingly impatient to know what sort of a personage her destinies were to be linked to while his majesty the Son advanced at a slow and stately pace. At last the Queen sent Johilā, the daughter of the leader, to take a close view of him, and to return and make a faithful and particular report of his person. His majesty was captivated with the little Johilā, the barber's daughter, at first sight; and she, "nothing loath," yielded to his caresses. Some say that she actually pretended to be Queen herself; and that his majesty was no further in

¹ Amarkantak, formerly in the Sohāgpur pargana of the Bilāspur District of the Central Provinces, is situated on a high table-land, and is a famous place of pilgrimage. The temples are described by Mr. Beglar in *Archæol. Surv. Reports*, vol. vii, p. p. 227-234, Plates xx, xxi. The hill has been transferred to the Rīwā State. (*Central Provinces Gazetteer*, s.v. Amarkantak.)

² The name is misspelled Sohan in the author's text. The Son really rises at Son Mundā, about twenty miles from Amarkantak. (*Archæol. Rep.* vii, 236.)

fault than in mistaking the humble handmaid for her noble mistress; but, be that as it may, her majesty no sooner heard of the good understanding between them, than she rushed forward, and with one foot sent the Son rolling back to the east whence he came, and with the other kicked little Johilā sprawling after him; for, said the high priest, who told us the story, "You see what a towering passion she was likely to have been in under such indignities from the furious manner in which she cuts her way through the marble rōcks beneath us, and casts huge masses right and left as she goes along, as if they were really so many cocoanuts." "And was she," asked I, "to have flown eastward with him, or was he to have flown westward with her?" "She was to have accompanied him eastward," said the high priest, "but her majesty, after this indignity, declared that she would not go a single pace in the same direction with such wretches, and would flow west, though all the other rivers in India might flow east; and west she flows accordingly, a virgin queen." I asked some of the Hindoos about us why they called her "Mother Nerbudda," if she was really never married. "Her majesty," said they with great respect, "would really never consent to be married after the indignity she suffered from her affianced bridegroom the Son; and we call her Mother because she blesses us all, and we are anxious to accost her by the name which we consider to be at once the most respectful and endearing."

Any Englishman can easily conceive a poet in his highest "calenture of the brain" addressing the ocean as "a steed that knows his rider," and patting the crested billow as his flowing mane; but he must come to India to understand how every individual of a whole community of many millions can address a fine river as a living being, a sovereign princess, who hears and understands all they say, and exercises a kind of local superintendence over their affairs, without a single temple in which her image

is worshipped, or a single priest to profit by the delusion. As in the case of the Ganges, it is the river itself to whom they address themselves, and not to any deity residing in it, or presiding over it; the stream itself is the deity which fills their imaginations, and receives their homage.

Among the Romans and ancient Persians rivers were propitiated by sacrifices. When Vitellius crossed the Euphrates with the Roman legions to put Tiridates on the throne of Armenia, they propitiated the river according to the rites of their country by the *suovetaurilia*, the sacrifice of the hog, the ram, and the bull. Tiridates did the same by the sacrifice of a horse. Tacitus does not mention the river *god*, but the river *itself*, as propitiated (See [Annals], book vi, chap. 37).¹ Plato makes Socrates condemn Homer for making Achilles behave disrespectfully towards the river Xanthus, though acknowledged to be a divinity, in offering to fight him,² and towards the river Sperchius, another acknowledged god, in presenting to the dead body of Patroclus the locks of his hair which he had promised to that river.³

The Son river, which rises near the source of the Nerbudda on the table-land of Amarkantak, takes a westerly course for some miles, and then turns off suddenly to the east, and is joined by the little stream of the Johilā before it descends the great cascade; and hence the poets have created this fiction, which the mass of the population receive as divine revelation. The statue of little Johilā, the barber's daughter, in stone, stands in the temple of the goddess Nerbudda at Amarkantak, bound in chains. It may here be remarked that the first overtures in India must always be made through the medium of the barber, whether they be from the prince or the

¹ "Sacrificantibus, cum hic more Romano suovetaurilia daret, ille equum placando amni adornasset."

² "μέγας ποταμὸς βαθυδίνης,

"Ὁν Ξάνθον καλέουσι θεοὶ, ἄνδρες δὲ Σκάμανδρον."—Iliad, xx, 73.

³ Iliad, xxiii, 140–153.



peasant.¹ If a sovereign prince sends proposals to a sovereign princess, they must be conveyed through the medium of the barber, or they will never be considered as done in due form, as likely to prove propitious. The prince will, of course, send some relation or high functionary with him ; but in all the credentials the barber must be named as the principal functionary. Hence it was that her majesty was supposed to have sent a barber's daughter to meet her husband.

The "Mahātam" (greatness or holiness) of the Ganges is said, as I have already stated, to be on the wane, and not likely to endure sixty years longer ; while that of the Nerbudda is on the increase, and in sixty years is entirely to supersede the sanctity of her sister. If the valley of the Nerbudda should continue for sixty years longer under such a government as it has enjoyed since we took possession of it in 1817,² it may become infinitely more rich, more populous, and more beautiful than that of the Nile ever was ; and, if the Hindoos there continue, as I hope they will, to acquire wealth and honour under a rule to which they are so much attached, the prophecy may be realized in as far as the increase of honour paid to the Nerbudda is concerned. But I know no ground to expect that the reverence paid to the Ganges will diminish, unless education and the concentration of capital in manufactures should work an important change in the religious feelings and opinions of the people along the

¹ Monier Williams denies the barber's monopoly of match-making. "In some parts of Northern India the match-maker for some castes is the family barber ; but for the higher castes he is more generally a Brāhman, who goes about from one house to another till he discovers a baby-girl of suitable rank." (*Religious Thought and Life in India*, p. 377.) So far as the editor knows, the barber is ordinarily employed in Northern India.

² During the operations against the Pindhāri freebooters. Several treaties were negotiated with the Peshwa and other native powers in the years 1817 and 1818.

³ The word in the text is "revenue."

course of that river ; although this, it must be admitted, is a consummation which may be looked for more speedily on the banks of the Ganges than on those of a stream like the Nerbudda, which is neither navigable at present, nor in my opinion capable of being rendered so. Commerce and manufactures, and the concentration of capital in the maintenance of the new communities employed in them will, I think, be the great media through which this change will be chiefly effected ; and they are always more likely to follow the course of rivers that are navigable than that of rivers which are not.¹

¹ Concerning the prophecy that the sanctity of the Ganges will cease in 1895, see note to Chapter I, *ante*, p. 7. The prophecy is still talked of, but the reverence for the Ganges continues undiminished, and the development of commerce and manufactures has not affected the religious feelings and opinions of the people. Railways facilitate pilgrimages and increase their popularity. The course of commerce now follows the line of rail, not the navigable rivers. The author evidently never contemplated the possibility of railway construction in India.



CHAPTER IV

A Suttee¹ on the Nerbudda.

WE took a ride one evening to Gopālpur, a small village situated on the same bank of the Nerbudda, about three miles up from Bherāghāt. On our way we met a party of women and girls coming to the fair. Their legs were uncovered half way up the thigh ; but, as we passed, they all carefully covered up their faces. "Good God !" exclaimed one of the ladies, "how can these people be so very indecent ?" *They* thought it, no doubt, equally extraordinary that she should have her face uncovered, while she so carefully concealed her legs ; for they were really all modest peasantry, going from the village to bathe in the holy stream.²

Here there are some very pretty temples, built for the most part to the memory of widows who have burned themselves with the remains of their husbands, and upon the very spot where they committed themselves to the flames. There was one which had been recently raised over the ashes of one of the most extraordinary old ladies that I have ever seen, who burned herself in my presence in 1829. I prohibited the building of any temple upon the spot, but my successor in the civil charge of the district, Major Low, was never, I believe, made acquainted with

¹ *Satī*, a virtuous woman, especially one who burns herself with her husband. The word, in common usage, is transferred to the sacrifice of the woman.

² The women of Bundēlkhand wear the same costume, a full loin-cloth, as those of the Jubbulpore district. North of the Jumna an ordinary petticoat is generally worn.

the prohibition nor with the progress of the work ; which therefore went on to completion in my absence. As suttees are now prohibited in our dominions,¹ and cannot be often seen or described by Europeans, I shall here relate the circumstances of this as they were recorded by me at the time, and the reader may rely upon the truth of the whole tale.

On the 29th November, 1829, this old woman, then about sixty-five years of age, here mixed her ashes with those of her husband, who had been burned alone four days before. On receiving civil charge of the district (Jubbulpore) in March, 1828, I issued a proclamation prohibiting any one from aiding or assisting in suttee, and distinctly stating that to bring one ounce of wood for the purpose would be considered as so doing. If the woman burned herself with the body of her husband, any one who brought wood for the purpose of burning *him* would become liable to punishment ; consequently, the body of the husband must be first consumed, and the widow must bring a fresh supply for herself. On Tuesday, 24th November, 1829, I had an application from the heads of the most respectable and most extensive family of Brahmans in the district to suffer this old woman to burn herself with the remains of her husband, Ummēd Singh Upadhya, who had that morning died upon the banks of the Nerbudda.² I threatened to enforce my order, and punish severely any man who assisted ; and placed a police guard for the purpose of seeing that no one did so. She remained sitting by the edge of the water without eating or drinking. The next

¹ Suttee was prohibited during the administration of Lord William Bentinck by the Bengal Regulation XVII, dated 4th December, 1829, extended in 1830 to Madras and Bombay. The advocates of the practice unsuccessfully appealed to the Privy Council. Several European officers defended the custom. A well written account of the suttee legislation is given in Mr. D. Boulger's work on Lord William Bentinck in the "Rulers of India" series.

² Whenever it is practicable, Hindoos are placed on the banks of sacred rivers to die, especially in Bengal.

day the body of her husband was burned to ashes in a small pit of about eight feet square, and three or four feet deep, before several thousand spectators who had assembled to see the suttee. All strangers dispersed before evening, as there seemed to be no prospect of my yielding to the urgent solicitations of her family, who dared not touch food till she had burned herself, or declared herself willing to return to them. Her sons, grandsons, and some other relations remained with her, while the rest surrounded my house, the one urging me to allow her to burn, and the other urging her to desist. She remained sitting on a bare rock in the bed of the Nerbudda, refusing every kind of sustenance, and exposed to the intense heat of the sun by day, and the severe cold of the night, with only a thin sheet thrown over her shoulders. On Thursday, to cut off all hope of her being moved from her purpose, she put on the *dhajā*, or coarse red turban, and broke her bracelets in pieces, by which she became dead in law, and for ever excluded from caste. Should she choose to live after this, she could never return to her family. Her children and grandchildren were still with her, but all their entreaties were unavailing; and I became satisfied that she would starve herself to death, if not allowed to burn, by which the family would be disgraced, her miseries prolonged, and I myself rendered liable to be charged with a wanton abuse of authority, for no prohibition of the kind I had issued had as yet received the formal sanction of the government.

On Saturday, the 28th, in the morning, I rode out ten miles to the spot, and found the poor old widow sitting with the *dhajā* round her head, a brass plate before her with undressed rice and flowers, and a cocoanut in each hand. She talked very collectedly, telling me that "she had determined to mix her ashes with those of her departed husband, and should patiently wait my permission to do so, assured that God would enable her to sustain life till that was given, though she dared not eat or drink." Looking at the sun, then rising before her over a long and beautiful

reach of the Nerbudda river, she said calmly, "My soul has been for five days with my husband's near that sun, nothing but my earthly frame is left; and this, I know, you will in time suffer to be mixed with the ashes of his in yonder pit, because it is not in your nature or usage wantonly to prolong the miseries of a poor old woman."

"Indeed, it is not,—my object and duty is to save and preserve them; and I am come to dissuade you from this idle purpose, to urge you to live, and to keep your family from the disgrace of being thought your murderers."

"I am not afraid of their ever being so thought, they have all, like good children, done everything in their power to induce me to live among them; and, if I had done so, I know they would have loved and honoured me; but my duties to them have now ended. I commit them all to your care, and I go to attend my husband, *Ummēd Singh Upadhya*, with whose ashes on the funeral pile mine have been already three times mixed."¹

This was the first time in her long life that she had ever pronounced the name of her husband, for in India no woman, high or low, ever pronounces the name of her husband,—she would consider it disrespectful towards him to do so; and it is often amusing to see their embarrassment when asked the question by any European gentleman. They look right and left for some one to relieve them from the dilemma of appearing disrespectful either to the querist, or to their absent husbands—they perceive that he is unacquainted with their duties on this point, and are afraid he will attribute their silence to disrespect. They know that few European gentlemen are acquainted with them; and when women go into our courts of justice, or other places where they are liable to be asked the names of their husbands, they commonly take one of their children or some other relation with them to pronounce the words in their stead. When the old lady named her husband, as

¹ For explanation of this phrase, see the following story of the Lodhi woman, p.p. 32, 36.

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she did with strong emphasis, and in a very deliberate manner, every one present was satisfied that she had resolved to die. "I have," she continued, "tasted largely of the bounty of government, having been maintained by it with all my large family in ease and comfort upon our rent-free lands ; and I feel assured that my children will not be suffered to want ; but with them I have nothing more to do, our intercourse and communion here end. My soul (prān) is with *Ummēd Singh Upadhya* : and my ashes must here mix with his."

Again looking to the sun—"I see them together," said she, with a tone and countenance that affected me a good deal, "under the bridal canopy!"—alluding to the ceremonies of marriage ; and I am satisfied that she at that moment really believed that she saw her own spirit and that of her husband under the bridal canopy in paradise.

I tried to work upon her pride and her fears. I told her that it was probable that the rent-free lands by which her family had been so long supported might be resumed by the government, as a mark of its displeasure against the children for not dissuading her from the sacrifice ; that the temples over her ancestors upon the bank might be levelled with the ground, in order to prevent their operating to induce others to make similar sacrifices ; and lastly, that not one single brick or stone should ever mark the place where she died if she persisted in her resolution. But, if she consented to live, a splendid habitation should be built for her among these temples, a handsome provision assigned for her support out of these rent-free lands, her children should come daily to visit her, and I should frequently do the same. She smiled, but held out her arm and said, "My pulse has long ceased to beat, my spirit has departed, and I have nothing left but a little *earth*, that I wish to mix with the ashes of my husband. I shall suffer nothing in burning ; and, if you wish proof, order some fire, and you shall see this arm consumed without giving me any pain." I did not attempt to feel her pulse, but some of my people

did, and declared that it had ceased to be perceptible. At this time every native present believed that she was incapable of suffering pain; and her end confirmed them in their opinion.

Satisfied myself that it would be unavailing to attempt to save her life, I sent for all the principal members of the family, and consented that she should be suffered to burn herself if they would enter into engagements that no other member of their family should ever do the same. This they all agreed to, and the papers having been drawn out in due form about midday, I sent down notice to the old lady, who seemed extremely pleased and thankful. The ceremonies of bathing were gone through before three [o'clock], while the wood and other combustible materials for a strong fire were collected and put into the pit. After bathing, she called for a "pān" (betel leaf) and ate it, then rose up, and with one arm on the shoulder of her eldest son, and the other on that of her nephew, approached the fire. I had sentries placed all round, and no other person was allowed to approach within five paces. As she rose up fire was set to the pile, and it was instantly in a blaze. The distance was about 150 yards. She came on with a calm and cheerful countenance, stopped once, and, casting her eyes upward, said, "Why have they kept me five days from thee, my husband?" On coming to the sentries her supporters stopped; she walked once round the pit, paused a moment, and, while muttering a prayer, threw some flowers into the fire. She then walked up deliberately and steadily to the brink, stepped into the centre of the flame, sat down, and leaning back in the midst as if reposing upon a couch, was consumed without uttering a shriek or betraying one sign of agony.

A few instruments of music had been provided, and they played, as usual, as she approached the fire, not, as is commonly supposed, in order to drown screams, but to prevent the last words of the victim from being heard, as these are supposed to be prophetic, and might become sources of

pain or strife to the living.¹ It was not expected that I should yield, and but few people had assembled to witness the sacrifice, so that there was little or nothing in the circumstances immediately around to stimulate her to any extraordinary exertions; and I am persuaded that it was the desire of again being united to her husband in the next world, and the entire confidence that she would be so if she now burned herself, that alone sustained her. From the morning he died (Tuesday) till Wednesday evening she ate "pāns" or betel leaves, but nothing else; and from Wednesday evening she ceased eating them. She drank no water from Tuesday. She went into the fire with the same cloth about her that she had worn in the bed of the river; but it was made wet from a persuasion that even the shadow of any impure thing falling upon her from going to the pile contaminates the woman unless counteracted by the sheet moistened in the holy stream.

I must do the family the justice to say that they all exerted themselves to dissuade the widow from her purpose, and had she lived she would assuredly have been cherished and honoured as the first female member of the whole house. There is no people in the world among whom parents are more loved, honoured, and obeyed than among the Hindoos; and the grandmother is always more honoured than the mother. No queen upon her throne could ever have been approached with more reverence by her subjects than was this old lady by all the members of her family as she sat upon a naked rock in the bed of the river, with only a red rag upon her head and a single white sheet over her shoulders.

Soon after the battle of Trafalgar I heard a young lady exclaim, "I could really wish to have had a brother killed in that action." There is no doubt that a family in which a suttee takes place feels a good deal exalted in its own

¹ An instance of such a prophecy, of a favourable kind, will be found at the end of this chapter, p. 37; and another, disastrously fulfilled, in Chapter XXI, *post*.

esteem and that of the community by the sacrifice. The sister of the Rājā of Riwā was one of four or five wives who burned themselves with the remains of the Rājā of Udaipur; and nothing in the course of his life will ever be recollected by her brother with so much of pride and pleasure, since the Udaipur Rājā is the head of the Rājput tribes.¹

I asked the old lady when she had first resolved upon becoming a suttee, and she told me that about thirteen years before, while bathing in the river Nerbudda, near the spot where she then sat, with many other females of the family, the resolution had fixed itself in her mind as she looked at the splendid temples on the bank of the river erected by the different branches of the family over the ashes of her female relations who had at different times become suttees. Two, I think, were over her aunts, and one over the mother of her husband. They were very beautiful buildings, and had been erected at great cost and kept in good repair. She told me that she had never mentioned this her resolution to any one from that time, nor breathed a syllable on the subject till she called out "Sat, sat, sat,"² when her husband breathed his last with his head in her lap on the bank of the Nerbudda, to which he had been taken when no hopes remained of his surviving the fever of which he died.

Charles Harding, of the Bengal Civil Service, as magistrate of Benares, in 1806 prevented the widow of a Brahman from being burned. Twelve months after her husband's death she had been goaded by her family into the expression of a wish to burn with some relic of her husband, preserved for the purpose. The pile was raised to her at

¹ Riwā (Rewah) is a considerable principality lying south of Allāhābād and Mirzapore and north of Sāgar. The chiefs are Baghēl Rājputs. The proper title of the Udaipur, or Mēwār, chief is Rānā, not Rājā. An elaborate history of Mēwār will be found in Tod's "Rājasthān."

² The masculine form of the word *satī* (suttee).

Rāmnagar,¹ some two miles above Benares, on the opposite side of the river Ganges. She was not well secured upon the pile, and as soon as she felt the fire she jumped off and plunged into the river. The people all ran after her along the bank, but the current drove her towards Benares, whence a police boat put off and took her in.

She was almost dead with the fright and the water, in which she had been kept afloat by her clothes. She was taken to Harding; but the whole city of Benares was in an uproar, at the rescue of a Brahman's widow from the funeral pile, for such it had been considered, though the man had been a year dead. Thousands surrounded his house, and his court was filled with the principal men of the city, imploring him to surrender the woman; and among the rest was the poor woman's *father*, who declared that he could not support his daughter; and that she had, therefore, better be burned, as her husband's family would no longer receive her. The uproar was quite alarming to a young man, who felt all the responsibility upon himself in such a city as² Benares, with a population of three hundred thousand people,³ so prone to popular insurrections, or risings *en masse* very like them. He long argued the point of the time that had elapsed, and the unwillingness of the woman, but in vain; until at last the thought struck him suddenly, and he said that "The sacrifice was manifestly unacceptable to their God—that the sacred river, as such, had rejected her; she had, without being able to swim, floated down two miles upon its bosom, in the face of an immense multitude; and it was clear that she had been rejected. Had she been an acceptable sacrifice, after the fire had touched her, the river would have received her." This satisfied the whole crowd. The

¹ Well known to tourists as the seat of the Mahārāja of Benares.

² "of" in text.

³ The population at the census of 1872 was 175,188; and at that of 1891 was 219,167. In the author's time no regular census had been taken. The figures given by him are merely a rough estimate.

father said that, after this unanswerable argument, he would receive his daughter; and the whole crowd dispersed satisfied.¹

The following conversation took place one morning between me and a native gentleman at Jubbulpore soon after suttees had been prohibited by Government:—

“What are the castes among whom women are not permitted to remarry after the death of their husbands?”

“They are, sir, Brahmans, Rājputs, Baniyās (shop-keepers), Kāyaths (writers).”

“Why not permit them to marry, now that they are no longer permitted to burn themselves with the dead bodies of their husbands?”

“The knowledge that they cannot unite themselves to a second husband without degradation from caste, tends strongly to secure their fidelity to the first, sir. Besides, if all widows were permitted to marry again, what distinction would remain between us and people of lower caste? We should all soon sink to a level with the lowest.”

“And so you are content to keep up your caste at the expense of the poor widows?”

“No; they are themselves as proud of the distinction as their husbands are.”

“And would they, do you think, like to hear the good old custom of burning themselves restored?”

“Some of them would, no doubt.”

“Why?”

“Because they become reunited to their husbands in paradise, and are there happy, free from all the troubles of this life.”

¹ This Benares story was accidentally omitted from the author's text, and was printed as a note at the end of the second volume. It has now been inserted in the place which seems most suitable. Interesting and well-told narratives of several suttees will be found in Bernier's "Travels in the Mogul Empire," p.p. 306-314, Vol. I of *Constable's Oriental Miscellany*.

"But you should not let them have any troubles as widows."

"If they behave well, they are the most honoured members of their deceased husbands' families ; nothing in such families is ever done without consulting them, because all are proud to have the memory of their lost fathers, sons, and brothers so honoured by their widows.¹ But women feel that they are frail, and would often rather burn themselves than be exposed all their lives to temptation and suspicion."

"And why do not the men burn themselves to avoid the troubles of life ?"

"Because they are not called to it from Heaven, as the women are."

"And you think that the women were really called to be burned by the Deity ?"

"No doubt ; we all believe that they were called and supported by the Deity ; and that no tender beings like women could otherwise voluntarily undergo such tortures—they become inspired with supernatural powers of courage and fortitude. When Duli Sukul, the Sihōrā² banker's father, died, the wife of a Lodhī cultivator of the town declared, all at once, that she had been a suttee with him six times before ; and that she would now go into paradise with him a seventh time. Nothing could persuade her from burning herself. She was between fifty and sixty years of age, and had grandchildren, and all her family tried to persuade her that it must be a mistake, but all in vain. She became a suttee, and was burnt the day after the body of the banker."

"Did not Duli Sukul's family, who were Brahmans, try

¹ Widows are not always so well treated. Their life in Lower Bengal, especially, is not a pleasant one.

² Sihōrā, on the road from Jubbulpore to Mirzāpur, 27 miles from the former, is a town with a population of more than 4,000. A smaller town with the same name exists in the Bhandāra district of the Central Provinces.

to dissuade her from it, she being a Lodhī, a very low caste ? ”

“ They did ; but they said all things were possible with God ; and it was generally believed that this was a call from Heaven.”

“ And what became of the banker’s widow ? ”

“ She said that she felt no divine call to the flames. This was thirty years ago ; and the banker was about thirty years of age when he died.”

“ Then he will have rather an old wife in paradise ? ”

“ No, sir ; after they pass through the flames upon earth, both become young in paradise.”

“ Sometimes women used to burn themselves with any relic of a husband, who had died far from home, did they not ? ”

“ Yes, sir, I remember a fisherman, about twenty years ago, who went on some business to Benares from Jubbulpore, and who was to have been back in two months. Six months passed away without any news of him ; and at last the wife dreamed that he had died on the road, and began forthwith, in the middle of the night, to call out ‘ Sat, sat, sat ! ’ Nothing could dissuade her from burning ; and in the morning a pile was raised for her, on the north bank of the large tank of Hanumān,¹ where you have planted an avenue of trees. There I saw her burned with her husband’s turban in her arms, and in ten days after her husband came back.”

“ Now the burning has been prohibited, a man cannot get rid of a bad wife so easily ? ”

“ But she was a good wife, sir, and bad ones do not often become suttees.”

“ Who made the pile for her ? ”

“ Some of her family, but I forget who. They thought it must have been a call from Heaven, when, in reality, it was only a dream.”

¹ The monkey-god. His shrines are very numerous in the Central Provinces and Bundēlkhand.

"Your are a Rājput ?"

"Yes."

"Do Rājputs in this part of India now destroy their female infants ?"

"Never ; that practice has ceased everywhere in these parts ; and is growing into disuse in Bundēlkhand, where the Rājās, at the request of the British Government, have prohibited it among their subjects. This was a measure of real good. You see girls now at play in villages, where the face of one was never seen before, nor the voice of one heard."

"But still those who have them grumble, and say that the Government which caused them to be preserved should undertake to provide for their marriage. Is it not so ?"

"At first they grumbled a little, sir ; but as the infants grew on their affections, they thought no more about it."¹

Gurcharan Baboo, the Principal of the little Jubbulpore College,² called upon me one forenoon, soon after this conversation. He was educated in the Calcutta College ; speaks and writes English exceedingly well ; is tolerably

¹ Within the last hundred years more than one officer has believed that infanticide had been suppressed by his efforts, and yet the practice is by no means extinct. In the North-Western Provinces the severely inquisitorial measures adopted in 1870, and since enforced, have no doubt done much to break the custom, but, in the neighbouring province of Oudh, no effective measures have been taken, and many female infants are still yearly murdered. A clear case in the Rāi Bareli District came before me in 1889, though no one was punished, for lack of judicial proof against any individual. The author discusses infanticide as practised in Oudh in many passages of his "Journey through the Kingdom of Oudh." I suspect that female infanticide is still prevalent in many Native States. Mr. Willoughby in the years preceding A.D. 1849 made great progress in stamping out infanticide among the Jharejas of the Kathiāwār States in the Bombay Presidency. There is reason to hope that the crime will gradually disappear.

² A college of more pretensions now exists at Jabalpur (Jubbulpore), and is affiliated in Arts and Law to the recently founded University of Allahabad. The small college alluded to in the text was abolished in 1850.

well read in English literature, and is decidedly a *thinking man*. After talking over the matter which caused his visit, I told him of the Lodhī woman's burning herself with the Brahman banker at Sihōrā, and asked him what he thought of it. He said that "In all probability this woman had really been the wife of the Brahman in some former birth—of which transposition a singular case had occurred in his own family.

His great-grandfather had three wives, who all burnt themselves with his body. While they were burning, a large serpent came up, and, ascending the pile, was burnt with them. Soon after another came up, and did the same. They were seen by the whole multitude, who were satisfied that they had been the wives of his great-grandfather in a former birth, and would become so again after this sacrifice. When the "srāddh," or funeral obsequies, were performed after the prescribed intervals,¹ the offerings and prayers were regularly made for *six souls* instead of four ; and, to this day, every member of his family, and every Hindoo who had heard the story, believed that these two serpents had a just right to be considered among his ancestors, and to be prayed for accordingly in all 'srāddh.'

A few days after this conversation with the Principal of the Jubbulpore College, I had a visit from Bholi Sukul, the present head of the Sihōrā banker's family, and youngest brother of the Brahman with whose ashes the Lodhī woman burned herself. I requested him to tell me all that he recollected about this singular suttee, and he did so as follows :—

"When my eldest brother, the father of the late Duli Sukul, who was so long a native collector under you in this district, died about twenty years ago at Sihōrā, a Lodhī woman, who resided two miles distant in the village of

¹ For description of the tedious and complicated "srāddh" ceremonies see chapter xi of Monier Williams's *Religious Thought and Life in India*.

Khitoli, which has been held by our family for several generations, declared that she would burn herself with him on the funeral pile ; that she had been his wife in three different births, had already burnt herself with him three times, and had to burn with him four times more. She was then sixty years of age, and had a husband living [of] about the same age. We were all astounded when she came forward with this story, and told her that it must be a mistake, as we were Brahmans, while she was a Lodhi. She said that there was no mistake in the matter ; that she, in the last birth, resided with my brother in the sacred city of Benares, and one day gave a holy man who came to ask charity salt, by mistake, instead of sugar, with his food. That, in consequence, he told her she should, in the next birth, be separated from her husband, and be of inferior caste ; but that, if she did her duty well in that state, she should be reunited to him in the following birth. We told her that all this must be a dream, and the widow of my brother insisted that, if she were not allowed to burn herself, the other should not be allowed to take her place. We prevented the widow from ascending the pile, and she died at a good old age only two years ago at Sihōrā. My brother's body was burned at Sihōrā, and the poor Lodhi woman came and stole one handful of the ashes, which she placed in her bosom, and took back with her to Khitoli. There she prevailed upon her husband and her brother to assist her in her return to her former husband and caste as a Brahman. No soul else would assist them, as we got the then native chief to prohibit it ; and these three persons brought on their own heads the pile, on which she seated herself, with the ashes in her bosom. The husband and his brother set fire to the pile, and she was burned."¹

“ And what is now your opinion, after a lapse of twenty years ? ”

¹ This version of the story differs in some minute particulars from the version given *ante*, p. 32.

“Why, that she had really been the wife of my brother ; for at the pile she prophesied that my nephew Duli should be, what his grandfather had been, high in the service of Government, and, as you know, he soon after became so.”

“And what did your father think?”

“He was so satisfied that she had been the wife of his eldest son in a former birth, that he defrayed all the expenses of her funeral ceremonies, and had them all observed with as much magnificence as those of any member of the family. Her tomb is still to be seen at Khitolī, and that of my brother at Sihōrā.”

I went to look at these tombs with Bholi Sukul himself some short time after this conversation, and found that all the people of the town of Sihōrā and village of Khitolī really believed that the old Lodhī woman had been his brother's wife in a former birth, and had now burned herself as his widow for the fourth time. Her tomb is at Khitolī, and his at Sihōrā.

CHAPTER V

Marriages of Trees — The Tank and the Plantain — Meteors— Rainbows.

BEFORE quitting Jubbulpore, to which place I thought it very unlikely that I should ever return, I went to visit the groves in the vicinity, which, at the time I held the civil charge of the district in 1828, had been planted by different native gentlemen upon lands assigned to them rent-free for the purpose, on condition that the holder should bind himself to plant trees at the rate of twenty-five to the acre, and keep them up at that rate; and that for each grove, however small, he should build and keep in repair a well, lined with masonry, for watering the trees, and for the benefit of travellers.¹ Some of these groves had already begun to yield fruit, and all had been *married*. Among the Hindoos, neither the man who plants a grove, nor his wife, can taste of the fruit till he has *married* one of the mango-trees to some other tree (commonly the tamarind-tree) that grows near it in the same grove. The proprietor of one of these groves that stands between the cantonment and the town, old Barjōr Singh, had spent so much in planting and watering the grove, and building walls and wells of *pucka*² masonry, that he could not afford to defray the expense of the marriage ceremonies till one of the trees, which was older than the rest when planted,

¹ In planting mango groves, it is a rule that they shall be as far from each other as not to admit of their branches ever meeting. "Plant trees, but let them not touch" ("*Ām lagao, nis lagen nahīn*") is the maxim. [W. H. S.]

² *Pakkā*; the word here means "cemented with lime mortar," and not only with mud (*Kachchhā*).

began to bear fruit in 1833, and poor old Barjōr Singh and his wife were in great distress that they dared not taste of the fruit whose flavour was so much prized by their children. They began to think that they had neglected a serious duty, and might, in consequence, be taken off before another season could come round. They therefore sold all their silver and gold ornaments, and borrowed all they could ; and before the next season the grove was married with all due pomp and ceremony, to the great delight of the old pair, who tasted of the fruit in June 1834.

The larger the number of the Brahmans that are fed on the occasion of the marriage, the greater the glory of the proprietor of the grove ; and when I asked old Barjōr Singh, during my visit to his grove, how many he had feasted, he said, with a heavy sigh, that he had been able to feast only one hundred and fifty. He showed me the mango-tree which had acted the part of the bridegroom on the occasion, but the bride had disappeared from his side. "And where is the bride, the tamarind ?" "The only tamarind I had in the grove died," said the old man, "before we could bring about the wedding ; and I was obliged to get a jasmine for a wife for my mango. I planted it here, so that we might, as required, cover both bride and bridegroom under one canopy during the ceremonies ; but, after the marriage was over, the gardener neglected her, and she pined away and died."

"And what made you prefer the jasmine to all other trees after the tamarind ?"

"Because it is the most celebrated of all trees, save the rose."

"And why not have chosen the rose for a wife ?"

"Because no one ever heard of marriage between the rose and the mango ; while they [*sic*] take place every day between the mango and the *chambēli* (jasmine)."¹

¹ The *chambēli* is in science known as the *Jasminum grandiflorum*, and the mango-tree as *Mangifera Indica*.

After returning from the groves, I had a visit after breakfast from a learned Muhammadan, now guardian to the young Rājā of Uchahara,¹ who resides part of his time at Jubbulpore. I mentioned my visit to the groves and the curious notion of the Hindoos regarding the necessity of marrying them; and he told me that, among Hindoos, the man who went to the expense of making a tank dared not drink of its waters till he had married his tank to some banana-tree, planted on the bank for the purpose.²

"But what," said he with a smile, "could you expect from men who believe that Indra is the god who rules the heavens immediately over the earth, that he sleeps during eight months in the year, and during the other four his time is divided between his duties of sending down rain upon the earth, and repelling with his arrows Rājā Bali, who by his austere devotions (*tapasya*) has received from the higher gods a promise of the reversion of his dominions? The lightning which we see," said the learned Maulavī, "they believe to be nothing more than the glittering of these arrows, as they are shot from the bow of Indra upon his foe Rājā Bali."³

"But, my good friend, Maulavī Sāhib, there are many good Muhammadans who believe that the meteors, which we call shooting stars, are in reality stars which the guardian angels of men snatch from the spheres, and throw at the devil as they see him passing through the air, or hiding him-

¹ A small principality west of Rīwā, and 110 miles north-west of Jubbulpore. It is also known as Nāgaudh, or Nāgod.

² Compare the account of the marriage of the *tulasi* shrub (*Ocimum sanctum*) with the *sālagrām* stone, or fossil ammonite, in Chapter XIX, *post*.

³ There is a sublime passage in the Psalms of David, where the lightning is said to be the arrows of God. *Psalms* lxxvii :—

17. "The clouds poured out water : the skies sent out a sound : thine arrows also went abroad.

18. The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven ; the lightnings lightened the world : the earth trembled and shook." [W. H. S.]

The passage is quoted from the authorized Bible version ; the Prayer Book version is finer.

self under one or other of the constellations. Is it not so ? ”

“ Yes, it is ; but we have the authority of the holy prophet for this, as delivered down to us by his companions in the sacred traditions, and we are bound to believe it. When our holy prophet came upon the earth, he found it to be infested with a host of magicians, who, by their abominable rites and incantations, get into their interest certain devils, or demons, whom they used to send up to heaven to listen to the orders which the angels received from God regarding men and the world below. On hearing these orders, they came off and reported them to the magicians, who were thereby enabled to foretell the events which the angels were ordered to bring about. In this manner they often overheard the orders which the angel Gabriel received from God, and communicated them to the magicians as soon as he could deliver them to our holy prophet. Exulting in the knowledge obtained in this diabolical manner, these wretches tried to turn his prophecies into ridicule ; and, seeing the evil effects of such practices among men, he prayed God to put a stop to them. From that time guardian angels have been stationed in different parts of the heavens, to keep off the devils ; and as soon as one of them sees a devil sneaking too near the heaven of heavens, he snatches the nearest star, and flings it at him.”¹ This, he added, was what all true Muham-madans believed regarding the shooting of stars. He had read nothing about them in the works of Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, or Galen, all of which he had carefully studied, and should be glad to learn from me what modern philosophers in Europe thought about them.

I explained to him the supposed distance and bulk of the fixed stars visible to the naked eye ; their being radiant with unborrowed light, and probably every one of them,

¹ “ We guard them from every devil driven away with stones ; except him who listeneth by stealth, at whom a visible flame is darted. Korān, chapter xv, Sale’s translation. See *post*, end of this chapter p. 44.

like our own sun, the great centre of a solar system of its own ; embracing the vast orbits of numerous planets, revolving around it with their attendant satellites ; the stars visible to the naked eye being but a very small portion of the whole which the telescope had now made distinctly visible to us ; and those distinctly visible being one cluster among many thousand with which the genius of Galileo, Newton, the Herschells, and many other modern philosophers had discovered the heavens to be studded. I remarked that the notion that these mighty suns, the centres of planetary systems, should be made merely to be thrown at devils and demons, appeared to us just as unaccountable as those of the Hindoos regarding Indra's arrows.

"But," said he, "these foolish Hindoos believe still greater absurdities. They believe that the rainbow is nothing but the fume of a large snake, concealed under the ground ; that he vomits forth this fume from a hole in the surface of the earth, without being himself seen ; and, when you ask them why, in that case, the rainbow should be in the west while the sun is in the east, and in the east while the sun is in the west, they know not what to say."¹

"The truth is, my friend, Maulavī Sāhib, the Hindoos, like a very great part of every other nation, are very much disposed to attribute to supernatural influences effects that the wiser portion of our species know to rise from natural causes."

The Maulavī was right. In the "*Mishkāt-ul-Masābih*,"² the authentic traditions of their prophet,³ it is stated that

¹ Nine Hindoos out of ten, or perhaps ninety-nine in a hundred, throughout India, believe the rainbow to arise from the breath of the snake, thrown up from the surface of the earth, as water is thrown up by whales from the surface of the ocean. [W. H. S.]

² "*Mishkāt* is a hole in a wall in which a lamp is placed, and *Masābih* the plural of 'a lamp,' because traditions are compared to lamps, and this book is like that which containeth a lamp. Another reason is, that *Masābih* is the name of a book, and this book comprehends its contents." (Matthews' translation, vol. i, p. v, note.)

³ The full title is "*Mishcāt-ul-Masābih*, or a Collection of the most

Ayesha, the widow of Muhammad, said, “ ‘ I heard his majesty say, “ the angels come down to the region next the world, and mention the works that have been pre-ordained in heaven ; and the devils, who descend to the lowest region, listen to what the angels say, and hear the orders predestined in heaven, and carry them to fortune-tellers ; therefore, they tell a hundred lies with it from themselves.” ’ ”¹

“ Ibn Abbās said, ‘ a man of his majesty’s friends informed me, that whilst his majesty’s friends were sitting with him one night, a very bright star shot ; and his highness said, “ what did you say in the days of ignorance when a star shot like this ? ” They said, “ God and his messenger know best ; we used to say, a great man was born to-night, and a great man died.” ’ ”² Then his majesty said, “ you mistook, because the shootings of these stars are neither for the life nor death of any person ; but when our cherisher orders a work, the bearers of the imperial throne sing hallelujahs ; and the inhabitants of the regions who are near the bearers repeat it, till it reaches the lowest regions. After the angels which are near the bearers of the imperial

Authentic Traditions regarding the Actions and Sayings of Muhammed ; exhibiting the Origin of the Manners and Customs ; the Civil, Religious, and Military Policy of the Muslemāns.” Translated from the original Arabic by Captain A. N. Matthews, Bengal Artillery. Two vols. 4^o ; Calcutta, 18c9-1810. This valuable work was published by subscription, and is now very scarce. A fine copy is in the India Office Library. The first volume is dated 1809 ; the second, 1810.

¹ Book xxi, chapter iii, part i ; vol. ii, p. 384. The quotations as given by the author are inexact. The editor has substituted correct extracts from Matthews’ text. Matthews spells the name of the prophet’s widow as Aáyeshah.

² In Sparta, the Ephoroi, once every nine years, watched the sky during a whole cloudless, moonless night, in profound silence ; and, if they saw a shooting star, it was understood to indicate that the kings of Sparta had disobeyed the gods, and their authority was, in consequence, suspended till they had been purified by an oracle from Delphi or Olympia. [W. H. S.] This statement rests on the authority of Plutarch, *Agis*, 11.

throne say, "what did your cherisher order?" Then they are informed; and so it is handed from one region to another, till the information reaches the people of the lowest region. Then the devils steal it, and carry it to their friends, (that is) magicians; and these stars are thrown at these devils; not for the birth or death of any person. Then the things which the magicians tell, having heard from the devils, are true, but these magicians tell lies, and exaggerate in what they hear."

Kutādah said, 'God has created stars for three uses; one of them, as a cause of ornament of the regions; the second, to stone the devil with; the third, to direct people going through forests and on the sea. Therefore, whoever shall explain them otherwise, does wrong, and loses his time, and speaks from his own invention and embellishes.'¹

Ibn Abbās. ['The prophet said,] "Whoever attains to the knowledge of astrology for any other explanation than the three afore-mentioned, then verily he has attained to a branch of magick. An astrologer is a magician, and a magician is a necromancer, and a necromancer is an infidel.'"²

This work contains the precepts and sayings of Muhammad, as declared by his companions, who themselves heard them, or by those who heard them immediately from those companions; and they are considered to be binding upon the faith and conduct of Musalmans, though not all delivered from inspiration.

Everything that is written in the Korān itself is supposed to have been brought direct from God by the angel Gabriel.³

¹ *Mishkāt*. Part iii of same chapter; vol. ii, p. 386.

² *Ibid.* p. 386.

³ But the prying character of these devils is described in the Korān itself. According to Muhammadans, they had access to all the seven heavens till the time of Moses, who got them excluded from three. Christ got them excluded from three more; and Muhammad managed to get them excluded from the seventh and last. "We have placed the twelve signs in the heavens, and have set them out in various

figures for the observation of spectators, and we guard them from every devil driven away with stones ; except him who listeneth by stealth, at whom a visible flame is darted." (Chapter xv.)

"We have adorned the lower heaven with the ornament of stars, and we have placed therein a guard against every rebellious devil, that they may not listen to the discourse of exalted princes, for they are darted at from every side, to repel them, and a lasting torment is prepared for them ; except him who catcheth a word by stealth, and is pursued by a shining flame." (Chapter xxxvii.) [W. H. S.] Passages of this kind should be remembered by persons who expect *orthodox* Muhammadans to accept the results of modern science.

CHAPTER VI

Hindoo Marriages.

CERTAIN it is that no Hindoo will have a marriage in his family during the four months of the rainy season ; for among eighty millions of souls¹ not one doubts that the Great Preserver of the universe is, during these four months, down on a visit to Rājā Bali, and, consequently, unable to bless the contract with his presence.²

Marriage is a sacred duty among Hindoos, a duty which every parent must perform for his children, otherwise they owe him no reverence. A family with a daughter unmarried after the age of puberty is considered to labour under the displeasure of the gods ; and no member of the other sex considers himself *respectable* after the age of puberty till he is married. It is the duty of his parent or elder brothers to have him suitably married ; and, if they do not do so, he reproaches them with his *degraded condition*. The same feeling, in a degree, pervades all the Muhammadan community ; and nothing appears so strange to them as the apparent indifference of old bachelors among us to their *sad condition*.

Marriage, with all its ceremonies, its rights, and its

¹ The author's figure of "eighty millions" was a mere guess, and was probably, even in his time, much below the mark. The figures of the census of 1891 are :—

		Hindus.		All Religions.
British India	155,171,943	...	221,172,952
Native States	52,559,784	...	66,050,479
		<hr/>		
All India	207,731,727	...	287,223,431

² See *ante*, Chapter I, p. 2, note.

duties, fills their imagination from infancy to age ; and I do not believe there is a country upon earth in which a larger portion of the wealth of the community is spent in the ceremonies, or where the rights are better secured, or the duties better enforced, notwithstanding all the disadvantages of the laws of polygamy. Not one man in ten can afford to maintain more than one wife, and not one in ten of those who can afford it will venture upon "a sea of troubles," in taking a second, if he has a child by the first. One of the evils which press most upon Indian society is the necessity which long usage has established of squandering large sums in marriage ceremonies. Instead of giving what they can to their children to establish them, and enable them to provide for their families and rise in the world, parents everywhere feel bound to squander all they can borrow in the festivities of their marriage. Men in India could never feel secure of being permitted freely to enjoy their property under despotic and unsettled governments, the only kind of governments they knew or hoped for ; and much of the means that would otherwise have been laid out in forming substantial works, with a view to a return in income of some sort or another, for the remainder of their own lives and of those of their children, were expended in tombs, temples, sarāis, tanks, groves, and other works—useful and ornamental, no doubt, but from which neither they nor their children could ever hope to derive income of any kind. The same feeling of insecurity gave birth, no doubt, to this preposterous usage, which tends so much to keep down the great mass of the people of India to that grade in which they were born, and in which they have nothing but their manual labour to depend upon for their subsistence. Every man feels himself bound to waste all his stock and capital, and exhaust all his credit in feeding idlers during the ceremonies which attend the marriage of his children, because his ancestors squandered similar sums, and he would sink in the estimation of society if he were to allow his children to be married with less.

But it could not have been solely because men could not invest their means in profitable works, with any chance of being long permitted to enjoy the profits under such despotic and unsettled governments, that they squandered them in feeding idle people in marriage ceremonies ; since temples, tanks, and groves secured esteem in this life, and promised some advantage in the next, and an outlay in such works might, therefore, have been preferred. But under such governments a man's title even to the exclusive possession of his wife might not be considered as altogether secure under the mere sanction of religion ; and the outlay in feeding the family, tribe, and neighbourhood during the marriage ceremony seems to have been considered as a kind of value in exchange given for her to society. There is nothing that she and her husband recollect through life with so much pride and pleasure as the cost of their marriage, if it happen to be large for their condition of life ; it is their *amoka*, their title of nobility ;¹ and their parents consider it their duty to make it as large as they can. A man would hardly feel secure of the sympathy of his family, tribe, circle of society, or rulers, for the loss of "his ox, or his ass, or anything that is his," if it should happen to have cost him nothing ; and, till he could feel secure of their sympathy for the loss, he would not feel very secure in the possession. He, therefore, or those who are interested in his welfare, strengthen his security by an outlay which invests his wife with a tangible value in cost, well understood by his circle and rulers. His family, tribe, and circle have received the purchase-money, and feel bound to secure to him the commodity purchased ; and, as they are in all such matters commonly much stronger than the rulers themselves, the money spent among them is more efficacious in securing the exclusive enjoyment of the wife than if it had been paid in taxes or

¹ I do not know this word "amoka," and have failed to find an explanation of it.

fees to them for a marriage license.¹ The pride of families and tribes, and the desire of the multitude to participate in the enjoyment of such ceremonies, tend to keep up this usage after the cause in which it originated may have ceased to operate ; but it will, it is to be hoped, gradually decline with the increased feeling of security to person, property, and character under our rule. Nothing is now more common than to see an individual in the humblest rank spending all that he has, or can borrow, in the marriage of one of many daughters, and trusting to Providence for the means of marrying the others, nor in the higher, to find a young man, whose estates have, during a long minority, under the careful management of Government officers, been freed from very heavy debts, with which an improvident father had left them encumbered, the moment he attains his majority and enters upon the management, borrowing three times their annual rent, at an exorbitant interest, to marry a couple of sisters, at the same rate of outlay in feasts and fireworks that his grandmother was married with.²

¹ Akbar levied a tax on marriages, and I think that a modern finance minister might do worse than follow his example. Such a tax would be safe, profitable, and easily collected.

² Extravagance in marriage expenses is still one of the principal curses of Indian society. Considerable efforts to secure reform have been made by various castes during recent years, but, as yet, small results only have been attained. Many years must elapse before any general reform can be hoped for. The editor has seen numerous painful examples of the wreck of fine estates by young proprietors assuming the management after a long term of the careful stewardship of the Court of Wards.

CHAPTER VII

The Purveyance System.

WE left Jubbulpore on the morning of the 20th November, 1835, and came on ten miles to Baghauri. Several of our friends of the 29th Native Infantry accompanied us this first stage, where they had a good day's shooting. In 1830 I established here some vendors in wood to save the people from the miseries of the purveyance system ; but I now found that a native collector, soon after I had resigned the civil charge of the district, and gone to Sāgar,¹ in order to ingratiate himself with the officers, and get from them favourable testimonials, gave two regiments, as they marched over this road, free permission to help themselves gratis out of the store-rooms of these poor men, whom I had set up with a loan from the public treasury, declaring that it must be the wish and intention of Government to supply their public officers free of cost ; and consequently that no excuses could be attended to. From that time shops and shopkeepers have disappeared. Wood for all public officers and establishments passing this road has ever since, as in former times, been collected from the surrounding villages gratis, under the purveyance system, in which all native public officers delight, and which, I am afraid, is encouraged by European officers, either from their ignorance or their indolence. They do not like the trouble of seeing the men paid either for their wood or

¹ or Saugor, the headquarters of the district of that name in the Central Provinces. The town is one hundred and nine miles north-west of Jabalpur. The author took charge of the Sāgar district in January 1831.

their labour ; and their head servants of the kitchen or the wardrobe weary and worry them out of their best resolutions on the subject. They make the poor men sit aloof by telling them that their master is a tiger before breakfast, and will eat them if they approach ; and they tell their masters that there is no hope of getting the poor men to come for their money till they have bathed or taken their breakfast. The latter wait in hopes that the gentleman will come out or send for them as soon as he has been tamed by his breakfast ; but this meal has put him in good humour with all the world, and he is now no longer unwilling to trust the payment of the poor men to his butler, or his *valet de chambre*. They keep the poor wretches waiting, declaring that they have as yet received no orders to pay them, till, hungry and weary, in the afternoon they all walk back to their homes in utter despair of getting anything.

If, in the meantime, the gentleman comes out, and finds the men, his servants pacify him by declaring either that they have not yet had time to carry his orders into effect, that they could not get copper change for silver rupees, or that they were anxious to collect all the people together before they paid any, lest they might pay some of them twice over. It is seldom, however, that he comes among them at all ; he takes it for granted that the people have all been paid ; and passes the charge in the account of his servants, who all get what these porters ought to have received. Or, perhaps the gentleman may persuade himself that, if he pays his valet or butler, these functionaries will never pay the poor men, and think that he had better sit quiet and keep the money in his own pocket. The native police or revenue officer is directed by his superior to have wood collected for the camp of a regiment or great civil officers, and he sends out his myrmidons to employ the people around in felling trees, and cutting up wood enough to supply not only the camp, but his own cook rooms and those of his friends for the next six months. The men so employed commonly get nothing ;

but the native officer receives credit for all manner of superlatively good qualities, which are enumerated in a certificate. Many a fine tree, dear to the affections of families and village communities, has been cut down in spite, or redeemed from the axe by a handsome present to this officer or his myrmidons. Lambs, kids, fowls, milk, vegetables, all come flowing in for the great man's table from poor people, who are too hopeless to seek for payment, or who are represented as too proud and wealthy to receive it. Such always have been and such always will be some of the evils of the purveyance system. If a police officer receives an order from the magistrate to provide a regiment, detachment, or individual with boats, carts, bullocks, or porters, he has all that can be found within his jurisdiction forthwith seized—releases all those whose proprietors are able and willing to pay what he demands, and furnishes the rest, which are generally the worst, to the persons who require them. Police officers derive so much profit from these applications that they are always anxious they should be made; and will privately defeat all attempts of private individuals to provide themselves by dissuading or intimidating the proprietors of vehicles from voluntarily furnishing them. The gentleman's servant who is sent to procure them returns and tells his master that there are plenty of vehicles, but that their proprietors dare not send them without orders from the police; and that the police tell him they dare not give such orders without the special sanction of the magistrate. The magistrate is written to, but declares that his police have been prohibited from interfering in such matters without special orders, since the proprietors ought to be permitted to send their vehicles to whom they choose, except on occasions of great public emergency; and, as the present cannot be considered as one of these occasions, he does not feel authorized to issue such orders. On the Ganges, many men have made large fortunes by pretending a general authority to seize boats for the use of the commissariat, or for other government

purposes, on the ground of having been once or twice employed on that duty ; and what they get is but a small portion of that which the public lose. One of these self-constituted functionaries has a boat seized on its way down or up the river ; and the crew, who are merely hired for the occasion, and have a month's wages in advance, seeing no prospect of getting soon out of the hands of this pretended government servant, desert, and leave the boat on the sands ; while the owner, if he ever learns the real state of the case, thinks it better to put up with his loss than to seek redress through expensive courts, and distant local authorities. If the boat happens to be loaded and to have a supercargo, who will not or cannot bribe high enough, he is abandoned on the sands by his crew ; in his search for aid from the neighbourhood, his helplessness becomes known—he is perhaps murdered, or runs away in the apprehension of being so—the boat is plundered and made a wreck. Still the dread of the delays and costs of our courts, and the utter hopelessness of ever recovering the lost property prevent the proprietors from seeking redress, and our government authorities know nothing of the circumstances.

We remained at Baghauri the 21st to enable our people to prepare for the long march they had before them, and to see a little more of our Jubbulpore friends, who were to have another day's shooting, as black partridges¹ and quail had been found abundant in the neighbourhood of our camp.²

¹ *Francolinus vulgaris*.

² The purveyance system (Persian *rasad rasānī*) above described is one of the necessary evils of Oriental life. It will be observed that the author, though so keenly sensitive to the abuses attending the system, proposes no substitute for it, and confesses that the small attempt he made to check abuse was a failure. From time immemorial it has been the custom for government officials in India to be supplied with necessities by the people of the country through which their camps pass. Under native governments no officials ever dream of paying for anything. In British territory requisitions are limited,

and in well-ordered civil camps nothing is taken without payment except wood, coarse earthen vessels, and grass. The hereditary village potter supplies the pots, and this duty is fully recognized as one attaching to his office. The landholders supply the wood and grass. None of these things are ordinarily procurable by private purchase in sufficient quantity. Officers commanding troops send in advance requisitions specifying the quantities of each article needed, and the indent is met by the civil authorities. Everything so indented for, including wood and grass, is supposed to be paid for, but in practice it is often impossible, with the agency available, to ensure actual payment to the persons entitled. Troops and the people in civil camps must live, and all that can be done is to check abuse, so far as possible, by vigilant administration. The obligation of landholders to supply necessities for troops and officials on the march is so well established that it forms one of the conditions of the contract with government under which proprietors in the permanently settled province of Benares hold their lands. The extreme abuses of which the system is capable under a lax and corrupt native government are abundantly illustrated in the author's "Journey through the Kingdom of Oudh." The "System of Purveyance and Forced Labour" is the subject of article xxv. in the Hon. F. J. Shore's curious book, "Notes on Indian Affairs" (London, 1837, 2 vols. 8vo). Many of the abuses denounced by Mr. Shore have been suppressed, but some, unhappily, still exist, and are likely to continue for many years.

CHAPTER VIII

Religious Sects—Self-government of the Castes—Chimney-sweepers¹
—Washerwomen—Elephant Drivers.

MĪR SALĀMAT ALĪ, the head native collector of the district, a venerable old Musalmān and most valuable public servant, who has been labouring in the same vineyard with me for the last fifteen years with great zeal, ability, and integrity, came to visit me after breakfast with too very pretty and interesting young sons. While we were sitting together my wife's under-woman² said to some one who was talking with her outside the tent-door, "If that were really the case, should I not be degraded?" "You see, Mīr Sāhib,"³ said I, "that the very lowest members of society among these Hindoos still feel the pride of caste, and dread exclusion from their own, however low."⁴

"Yes," said the Mīr, "they are a very strange kind of people, and I question whether they ever had a real prophet among them."

"I question, Mīr Sāhib, whether they really ever had

¹ This is a slip. There are no chimney-sweepers in India. The word should be "sweepers." The members of this caste and a few other degraded communities, such as the Doms, do all the sweeping, scavenging, and conservancy work in India. "Washerwomen" is another slip. Read "Washermen."

² The "under-woman," or "second ayah," was a member of the sweeper caste.

³ The title Mīr Sāhib implies that Salāmat Alī was a Sayyid, claiming descent from Alī, the cousin, son-in-law, and pupil of Muhammad, who became Khalif in A.D. 656.

⁴ The sweeper castes stand outside the Hindoo pale, and often incline to Muhammadan practices. They worship a special form of the Deity, under the names of Lāl Beg, Lāl Guru, etc.



such a person. They of course think the incarnations of their three great divinities were beings infinitely superior to prophets, being in all their attributes and prerogatives equal to the divinities themselves.¹ But we are disposed to think that these incarnations were nothing more than great men whom their flatterers and poets have exalted into gods—this was the way in which men made their gods in ancient Greece and Egypt. These great men were generally conquerors whose glory consisted in the destruction of their fellow-creatures; and this is the glory which their flatterers are most prone to extol. All that the poets have sung of the actions of men is now received as revelation from heaven; though nothing can be more monstrous than the actions attributed to the best incarnation, Krishna, of the best of their gods, Vishnu.”²

“No doubt,” said Salāmat Ali; “and had they ever had a *real prophet* among them he would have revealed better things to them. Strange people! when their women go on pilgrimages to Gayā, they have their heads shaved before the image of their god; and the offering of the hair is equivalent to the offer of their heads;”³ for heads, thank God, they dare no longer offer within the Company’s territories.”

“Do you, Mir Sāhib, think that they continue to offer up human sacrifices anywhere?”

¹ No *avatār* or incarnation of Brahmā is known to most Hindoos, and incarnations of Siva are rarely mentioned. The only *avatārs* ordinarily recognized are those of Vishnu, as enumerated *ante*, Chapter II, *note*, p. 12.

² This theory is a very inadequate explanation of the doctrine of *avatārs*.

³ “Women . . . are most careful to preserve their hair intact. They pride themselves on its length and weight. For a woman to have to part with her hair is one of the greatest of degradations, and the most terrible of all trials. It is the mark of widowhood. Yet in some sacred places, especially at the confluence of rivers, the cutting off and offering of a few locks of hair (*Veni-dānam*) by a virtuous wife is considered a highly meritorious act.” (Monier Williams, *Religious Thought and Life in India*, page 375.) Gayā in Bihār, 55 miles south of Patna, is much frequented by pilgrims devoted to Vishnu.

“Certainly I do. There is a Rājā at Ratanpur, or somewhere between Mandlā and Sambalpur, who has a man offered up to Devī every year, and that man must be a Brahman. If he can get a Brahman traveller, well and good; if not, he and his priests offer one of his own subjects. Every Brahman that has to pass through this territory goes in disguise.¹ With what energy did our emperor Aurangzeb apply himself to put down iniquities like this in the Rājputāna states, but all in vain. If a Rājā died,

¹ The places named are all in the Central Provinces; Ratanpur, in the Bilāspur District, is a place of much antiquarian interest, full of ruins; Mandlā, in the Mandlā District, was the capital of the later Gond chiefs of Garhā Mandlā; and Sambalpur is the capital of the Sambalpur District. If the story is true, the selection of a Brahman for sacrifice is remarkable, though not without precedent. Human sacrifice has prevailed very largely in India, and is not yet quite extinct. In 1891 some Jāts in the Muzaffarnagar District of the North-Western Provinces sacrificed a boy in a very painful manner for some unascertained magical purpose. It was supposed that the object was to induce the gods to grant offspring to a childless woman. Other similar cases have occurred in recent years. One occurred close to Calcutta in 1892. The bloody sacrifices of buffaloes at the Dasahra festival in Nepāl, Balrāmpur in Oudh, Basti in the North-Western Provinces, and other places, are probably substitutes for human sacrifices. In the hill tracts of Orissa bordering on the Central Provinces the rite of human sacrifice was practised by the Khonds on an awful scale, and with horrid cruelty. It was suppressed by the special efforts of Macpherson, Campbell, MacVicar, and other officers, between the years 1837 and 1854. During this period the British officers rescued 1,506 victims intended for sacrifice. (*Narrative of Major-General John Campbell, C.B., of his Operations in the Hill Tracts of Orissa for the Suppression of Human Sacrifices and Female Infanticide*. Printed for private circulation. London: Hurst and Blackett, 1861.) The rite, when practised by Hindoos, was perhaps borrowed from some of the aboriginal races. The practice, however, has been so general throughout the world that few races can claim the honour of being free from the stain of adopting it at one time or another. Much curious information on the subject, and many modern instances of human sacrifices in India, are collected in the article “Sacrifice” in Balfour’s *Cyclopædia of India*, 3rd edition, 1885. Major S. C. Macpherson’s *Memorials of Service in India* (1865), and Frazer’s *Golden Bough* (London, 1890), may also be consulted.

all his numerous wives burnt themselves with his body—even their servants, male and female, were obliged to do the same ; for, said his friends, what is he to do in the next world without attendants ? The pile was enormous. On the top sat the queen with the body of the prince ; the servants, male and female, according to their degree, below ; and a large army stood all round to drive into the fire again or kill all who should attempt to escape.”¹

“This is all very true, Mīr Sāhib, but you must admit that, though there is a great deal of absurdity in their customs and opinions, there is, on the other hand, much that we might all take an example from. The Hindoo believes that Christians and Musalmāns may be as good men in all relations of life as himself, and in as fair a way to heaven as he is ; for he believes that my Bible and your Korān are as much revelations framed by the Deity for our guidance, as the Shāstras are for his. He doubts not that our Christ was the Son of God, nor that Muhammad was the prophet of God ; and all that he asks from us is to allow him freely to believe in his own gods, and to worship in his own way. Nor does one caste or sect of Hindoos ever believe itself to be alone in the right way, or detest any other for not following in the same path, as they have as much of toleration for each other as they have for us.”²

“True,” exclaimed Salāmat Ali, “too true ! we have ruined each other ; we have cut each other’s throats ; we have lost the empire, and we deserve to lose it. You won it, and you preserved it by your *union*—ten men with one heart are equal to a hundred men with different hearts. A Hindoo may feel himself authorized to take in a Musalmān,

¹ Bernier vividly describes an “infernal tragedy” of this kind which he witnessed, in or about the year 1659, during Aurangzēb’s reign, in Rājputāna. On that occasion five female slaves burnt themselves with their mistress. (Travels in the Mogul Empire, *Constable’s Oriental Miscellany* edition, p. 309.)

² Hinduism is a social system, not a creed. A Hindoo may believe, or disbelieve, what speculative doctrine he chooses, but he must not eat, drink, or marry, save in accordance with the custom of his caste.

and might even think it *meritorious* to do so; but he would never think it meritorious to take in one of his own religion. There are no less than seventy-two sects of Muhammadans; and every one of these sects would not only take in the followers of every other religion on earth, but every member of every one of the other seventy-one sects; and the nearer that sect is to its own, the greater the merit in taking in its members.”¹

¹ Mir Salāmat Alī is a staunch Sunnī, the sect of Osmān; and they are always at daggers drawn with the Shīas, or the sect of Ali. He alludes to the Shīas when he says that one of the seventy-two sects is always ready to take in the whole of the other seventy-one. Muhammad, according to the traditions, was one day heard to say, “The time will come when my followers will be divided into seventy-three sects; all of them will assuredly go to hell save one.” Every one of the seventy-three sects believes itself to be the one happily excepted by their prophet, and predestined to paradise. I am sometimes disposed to think Muhammad was self-deluded, however difficult it might be to account for so much “method in his madness.” It is difficult to conceive a man placed in such circumstances with more amiable dispositions or with juster views of the rights and duties of men in all their relations with each other, than are exhibited by him on almost all occasions, save where the question of *faith* in his divine mission was concerned.

A very interesting and useful book might be made out of the history of those men, more or less *mad*, by whom multitudes of mankind have been led and perhaps governed; and a philosophical analysis of the points on which they were really mad and really sane, would show many of them to have been fit subjects for a madhouse during the whole career of their glory. [W. H. S.]

For an account of Muhammadan sects see Section viii. of the Preliminary Dissertation in Sale’s Korān, entitled, “Of the Principal Sects among the Muhammadans; and of those who have pretended to Prophecy among the Arabs, in or since the Time of Muhammad.” The chief sects of the Sunnīs, or Traditionists, are four in number. “The principal sects of the Shīas are five, which are subdivided into an almost innumerable number.” The court of the kings of Oudh was Shīa. In most parts of India the Sunnī faith prevails.

The relation between genius and insanity is well expressed by Dryden (*Absalom and Achitophel*):—

“Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.”

“Something has happened of late to annoy you, I fear, Mir Sāhib?”

“Something happens to annoy us every day, sir, where we are more than one sect of us together; and wherever you find Musalmāns you will find them divided into sects.”

It is not, perhaps, known to many of my countrymen in India that in every city and town in the country the right of sweeping the houses and streets is one of the most intolerable of monopolies, supported entirely by the pride of caste among the scavengers, who are all of the lowest class. The right of sweeping within a certain range is recognized by the caste to belong to a certain member; and, if any other member presumes to sweep within that range, he is excommunicated—no other member will smoke out of his pipe, or drink out of his jug; and he can get restored to caste only by a feast to the whole body of sweepers. If any housekeeper within a particular circle happens to offend the sweeper of that range, none of his filth will be removed till he pacifies him, because no other sweeper will dare to touch it; and the people of a town are often more tyrannized over by these people than by any other.¹

The treatise of Professor Cesare Lombroso, entitled *The Man of Genius* (London edition, 1891), is devoted to proof and illustration of the proposition that genius is “a special morbid condition.” He deals briefly with the case of Muhammad at pages 31, 39, and 325, maintaining that the prophet, like Saint Paul, Julius Caesar, and many other men of genius, was subject to epileptic fits. The Professor’s book seems to be exactly what Sir W. H. Sleeman desired to see.

¹ In the author’s time municipal conservancy and sanitation were almost unknown in India, and the tyranny of the sweepers’ guild was chiefly felt as a private inconvenience. It is now one of the principal of the many difficulties, little understood in Europe, which bar the progress of Indian sanitary reform. The sweepers cannot be readily coerced because no Hindoo or Musalmān would do their work to save his life, nor will he pollute himself even by beating the refractory scavenger. A strike of sweepers on the occasion of a great fair, or of a cholera epidemic, is a most dangerous calamity. The vested rights described in the text are so fully recognized in practice that they are frequently the subject of sale or mortgage.

It is worthy of remark that in India the spirit of combination is always in the inverse ratio to the rank of the class ; weakest in the highest, and strongest in the lowest class. All infringements upon the rules of the class are punished by fines. Every fine furnishes a feast at which every member sits and enjoys himself. Payment is enforced by excommunication—no one of the caste will eat, drink, or smoke with the convicted till the fine is paid ; and, as every one shares in the fine, every one does his best to enforce payment. The fines are imposed by the elders who know the circumstances of the culprit, and fix the amount accordingly. Washermen will often at a large station combine to prevent the washermen of one gentleman from washing the clothes of the servants of any other gentleman, or the servants of one gentleman from getting their clothes washed by any other person than their own master's washerman. This enables them sometimes to raise the rate of washing to double the fair or ordinary rate ; and at such places the washermen are always drunk with one continued routine of feasts from the fines levied.¹ The cost of these fees falls ultimately upon the poor servants or their masters. This combination, however, is not always for bad or selfish purposes. I was once on the staff of an officer commanding a brigade on service, whose elephant driver exercised an influence over him that was often mischievous and sometimes dangerous ;² for in marching and choosing his ground, this man was more often consulted than the quarter-master-general. His bearing was most insolent, and became intolerable, as well to the European gentlemen, as to the people of his caste.³ He at last committed himself by saying that he would spit in

¹ The low caste Hindoos are generally fond of drink, when they can get it, but seldom commit crime under its influence.

² An elephant driver, by reason of his position on the animal, has opportunities for private conversation with his master.

³ Elephant drivers (*mahouts*) are Muhammadans, who should have no caste, but Indian Musalmāns have become Hinduized, and have fallen under the dominion of caste.

the face of another gentleman's elephant driver with whom he was disputing. All the elephant drivers in our large camp were immediately assembled, and it was determined in council to refer the matter to the decision of the Rājā of Darbhanga's driver, who was acknowledged the head of the class. We were all breakfasting with the brigadier after muster when the reply came—the distance to Darbhanga from Nāthpur on the Kūsi river, where we then were, must have been a hundred and fifty miles.¹ We saw men running in all directions through the camp, without knowing why, till at last one came and summoned the brigadier's driver. With a face of terror he came and implored the protection of the brigadier; who got angry, and fumed a good deal, but seeing no expression of sympathy on the faces of his officers, he told the man to go and hear his sentence. He was escorted to a circle formed by all the drivers in camp, who were seated on the grass. The offender was taken into the middle of the circle and commanded to stand on one leg² while the Rājā's driver's letter was read. He did so, and the letter directed him to apologize to the offended party, pay a heavy fine for a feast, and pledge himself to the offended drivers never to offend again. All the officers in camp were delighted, and some, who went to hear the sentence explained, declared that in no court in the world could the thing have been done with more solemnity and effect. The man's character was quite altered by it, and he became the most docile of drivers. On the same principle here stated of enlisting the community in the punishment of offenders, the New Zealanders, and other savage tribes who have been fond of human flesh, have generally been found to confine the feast to the body of those who were put to death for offences

¹ Darbhanga is in Tirhūt, 70 miles N E. of Dinapore. The Kūsi (Koosee) river rises in the mountains of Nepāl, and falls into the Ganges after a course of about 325 miles. Nāthpur, in the Puraniya (Purneah) District, is a mart for the trade with Nepāl.

² The customary attitude of a suppliant.

against the state or the individual. I and all the officers of my regiment were at one time in the habit of making every servant who required punishment or admonition to bring immediately, and give to the first religious mendicant we could pick up, the fine we thought just. All the religionists in the neighbourhood declared that justice had never been so well administered in any other regiment; no servant got any sympathy from them—they were all told that their masters were far too lenient.

We crossed the Hiran river¹ about ten miles from our last ground on the 22nd,² and came on two miles to our tents in a mango grove close to the town of Katangī,³ and under the Vindhya range of sandstone hills, which rise almost perpendicular to the height of some eight hundred feet over the town. This range from Katangī skirts the Nerbudda valley to the north, as the Sātpura range skirts it to the south; and both are of the same sandstone formation capped with basalt upon which here and there are found masses of laterite, or iron clay. Nothing has ever yet been found reposing upon this iron clay.⁴ The strata of this range have a gentle and almost

¹ A small river which falls into the Nerbudda on the right-hand side, at Sānkāl. Its general course is south-west.

² November, 1835.

³ Described in the Gazetteer (1870) as “a large but decaying village in the Jabalpur district, situated at the foot of the Bhānrer hills, twenty-two miles to the north-west of Jabalpur, on the north side of the Hiran, and on the road to Sāgar.”

⁴ The convenient restriction of the name Vindhya to the hills north, and of Sātpura to the hills south of the Nerbudda is of modern origin. (*Manual of the Geology of India*, Part I, p. iv.) The Sātpura range, thus defined, separates the valley of the Nerbudda from the valleys of the Taptī flowing west, and the Mahānadi flowing east. The Vindhyan sandstones are certainly a formation of immense antiquity, perhaps præ-Silurian. They are azoic, or devoid of fossils; and it is consequently impossible to determine exactly their geological age, or “horizon.” (*ibid.* p. xxiii.) The cappings of basalt, in some cases with laterite superimposed, suggest many difficult problems, which will be briefly discussed in the notes to Chapters XIV and XVII of this volume.

imperceptible dip to the north, at right angles to its face which overlooks the valley, and this face has everywhere the appearance of a range of gigantic round bastions projecting into what was perhaps a lake, and is now a well-peopled, well-cultivated, and very happy valley, about twenty miles wide. The river crosses and recrosses it diagonally. Near Jubbulpore it flows along for some distance close under the Sātpura range to the south ; and crossing over the valley from Bheraghāt, it reaches the Vindhya range to the north, at the point where it reaches the Hiran river, forty miles below.

CHAPTER IX

The Great Iconoclast—Troops routed by Hornets—The Rānī of Garhā—Hornets' Nests in India.

ON the 23rd,¹ we came on nine miles to Sangrāmpur, and, on the 24th, nine more to the valley of Jabērā,² situated on the western extremity of the bed of a large lake, which is now covered by twenty-four villages. The waters were kept in by a large wall that united two hills about four miles south of Jabērā. This wall was built of great cut freestone blocks from the two hills of the Vindhya range, which it united. It was about half a mile long, one hundred feet broad at the base, and about one hundred feet high. The stones, though cut, were never, apparently, cemented; and the wall has long given way in the centre, through which now falls a small stream that passes from east to west of what was once the bottom of the lake, and now is the site of so many industrious and happy little village communities.³ The proprietor of the

¹ November, 1835.

² Sangrāmpur is in the Jabalpur District, thirty miles north-west of Jabalpur, or the road to Sāgar. The village of Jaberā is thirty-nine miles from Jabalpur.

³ Similar lakes, formed by means of huge dams thrown across valleys, are very numerous in the Central Provinces and Bundēlkhand. The embankments of some of these lakes are maintained by the Indian Government, and the water is distributed for irrigation. Many of the lakes are extremely beautiful, and the ruins of grand temples and palaces are often found on their banks. Several of the embankments are known to have been built by the Chandēlla princes between A.D. 800 and 1200, and some are believed to be the work of an earlier Parihār dynasty.

village of Jabērā, in whose mango grove our tents were pitched, conducted me to the ruins of the wall ; and told me that it had been broken down by the order of the Emperor Aurangzēb.¹ History to these people is all a fairy tale ; and this emperor is the great destroyer of everything that the Muhammadans in their fanaticism have demolished of the Hindoo sculpture or architecture ; and yet, singular as it may appear, they never mention his name with any feelings of indignation or hatred. With every scene of his supposed outrage against their gods or their temples, there is always associated the recollection of some instance of his piety, and the Hindoos' glory—of some idol, for instance, or column, preserved from his fury by a miracle, whose divine origin he is supposed at once to have recognized with all due reverence.

At Bherāgarh,² the high priest of the temple told us that Aurangzēb and his soldiers knocked off the heads, arms, and noses of all the idols, saying that “if they had really any of the godhead in them, they would assuredly now show it, and save themselves.” But when they came to the door of Gaurī Sankar's apartments, they were attacked by a nest of hornets, that put the whole of the emperor's army to the rout ; and his imperial majesty called out : “Here we have really something like a god, and we shall not suffer him to be molested ; if all your gods could give us proof like this of their divinity, not a nose of them would ever be touched.”

The popular belief, however, is that after Aurangzēb's army had struck off all the prominent features of the other gods, one of the soldiers entered the temple, and struck off the ear of one of the prostrate images underneath their

¹ A.D. 1658–1707. Aurangzēb, though credited with more destruction than he accomplished, did really destroy many Hindoo temples at Benares and elsewhere.

² This name is used as a synonym for Bheraghāt, *ante*, p. 1. It is written Beragur in the author's text. The author, in *Ramasevana*, Introduction, p. 77, note, describes the Gaurī-Sankar sculpture as being “at Beragur on the Nerbudda river.”

vehicle, the Bull. "My dear," said Gaurī, "do you see what these saucy men are about?" Her consort turned round his head;¹ and, seeing the soldiers around him, brought all the hornets up from the marble rocks below, where there are still so many nests of them, and the whole army fled before them to Teorī, five miles.² It is very likely that some body of troops by whom the rest of the images had been mutilated, may have been driven off by a nest of hornets from within the temple where this statue stands. I have seen six companies of infantry, with a train of artillery, and a squadron of horse, all put to the rout by a single nest of hornets, and driven off some miles with all their horses and bullocks. The officers generally save themselves by keeping within their tents, and creeping under their bed-clothes, or their carpets; and servants often escape by covering themselves up in their blankets, and lying perfectly still. Horses are often stung to a state of madness, in which they throw themselves over precipices, and break their limbs, or kill themselves. The grooms, in trying to save their horses, are generally the people who suffer most in a camp attacked by such an enemy. I have seen some so stung as to recover with difficulty; and I believe there have been instances of people not recovering at all. In such a frightful scene I have seen a bullock sitting and chewing the cud as calmly as if the whole thing had been got up for his amusement. The hornets seldom touch any animal that remains perfectly still.

On the bank of the Binā river at Eran, in the Sāgar district, is a beautiful pillar of a single freestone, more than fifty feet high, surmounted by a figure of Krishna,

¹ Gaurī is one of the many names of Pārvatī, or Devī, the consort of the god Siva, Sankar, or Mahādēo, who rides upon the bull Nandī.

² This village seems to be the same as Tewar, the ancient Tripura, "six miles to the west of Jabalpur, and on the south side of the Bombay road." (*Arch. Rep.* ix, 57.) The adjacent ruins are known by the name of Karanbēl.

with the glory round his head.¹ Some few of the rays of this glory have been struck off by lightning; but the people declare that this was done by a shot fired at it from a cannon by order of Aurangzēb, as his army was marching by on its way to the Deccan. Before the scattered fragments, however, could reach the ground, the air was filled, they say, by a swarm of hornets, that put the whole army to flight; and the emperor ordered his gunners to desist, declaring that he was "satisfied of the presence of the god." There is hardly any part of India in which, according to popular belief, similar miracles were not worked to convince the emperor of the peculiar merits or sanctity of particular idols or temples, according to the traditions of the people, derived, of course, from the inventions of priests. I should mention that these hornets suspend their nests to the branches of the highest trees, under rocks, or in old deserted temples. Native travellers, soldiers, and camp followers, cook and eat their food under such trees; but they always avoid one in which there is a nest of hornets, particularly on a still day. Sometimes they do not discover the nest till it is too late. The unlucky wight goes on feeding his fire, and delighting in the prospect of the feast before him, as the smoke ascends in curling eddies to the nest of the hornets. The moment it touches them they sally forth and descend, and sting like mad creatures every living thing they find in motion. Three companies of my regiment were escorting treasure in boats from Allahabad to Cawnpore for the army under the Marquis of Hastings, in 1817.² The soldiers all took their

¹ The pillar bears an inscription showing that it was erected during the reign of Budha Gupta, in the year 165 of the Gupta era, corresponding to A.D. 483-4. This, and the other important remains of antiquity at Eran, are fully described in Cunningham's *Archæol. Survey Reports*, vol. vii, p. 88; vol. x, pp. 76-90, Plates xxiii—xxx; and vol. xiv, p. 149. Plate xxxi; also in Fleet's *Gupta Inscriptions*, being vol. iii of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*.

² During the wars with the Marāthās and Pindhāris, which ended in 1819.

dinners on shore every day; and one still afternoon a sipāhi (sepoy), by cooking his dinner under one of those nests without seeing it, sent the infuriated swarm among the whole of his comrades, who were cooking in the same grove, and undressed, as they always are on such occasions. Treasure, food, and all were immediately deserted, and the whole of the party, save the European officers, were up to their noses in the river Ganges. The hornets hovered over them; and it was amusing to see them bobbing their heads under as the insects tried to pounce upon them. The officers covered themselves up in the carpets of their boats; and, as the day was a hot one, their situation was still more uncomfortable than that of the men. Darkness alone put an end to the conflict.

I should mention that the poor old Rānī, or Queen of Garhā, Iachhmi Kūar, came out as far as Katangī with us to take leave of my wife, to whom she has always been attached. She had been in the habit of spending a day with her at my house once a week; and being the only European lady from whom she had ever received any attention, or indeed ever been on terms of any intimacy with, she feels the more sensible of the little offices of kindness and courtesy she has received from her.¹ Her husband, Narhar Sā, was the last of the long line of sixty-two sovereigns who reigned over these territories from the year A.D. 358 to the Sāgar conquest, A.D. 1781.² He died a prisoner in the fortress of Kūrai, in the Sāgar district, in

¹ After we left Jubbulpore, the old Rānī used to receive much kind and considerate attention from the Hon. Mrs. Shore, a very amiable woman, the wife of the Governor-General's representative, the Hon. Mr. Shore, a very worthy and able member of the Bengal Civil Service. [W. H. S.] For notice of Mr. Shore, see note at end of Chapter XIII, p. 110.

² See the author's paper entitled "History of the Gurha Mundala Rajas," in *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. vi, p. 621, and the article "Mandla" in *Central Provinces Gazetteer*.

A.D. 1789, leaving two widows.¹ One burnt herself upon the funeral pile, and the other was prevented from doing so, merely because she was thought too young, as she was not then fifteen years of age. She received a small pension from the Sāgar government, which was still further reduced under the Nāgpur government which succeeded it in the Jubbulpore district in which the pension had been assigned ; and it was not thought necessary to increase the amount of this pension when the territory came under our dominion,² so that she has had barely enough to subsist upon, about one hundred rupees a month. She is now about sixty years of age, and still a very good-looking woman. In her youth she must have been beautiful. She does not object to appear unveiled before gentlemen on any particular occasion ; and, when Lord W. Bentinck was at Jubbulpore in 1833, I introduced the old queen to him. He seemed much interested, and ordered the old lady a pair of shawls. None but very coarse ones were found in the store-rooms of the Governor-General's representative, and his lordship said these were not such as a Governor-General could present, or a *queen*, however poor, receive ; and as his own "toshakhāna" (wardrobe) had gone on,³ he desired that a pair of the finest kind should be

¹ Kūrai is on the route from Sāgar to Nasirābād, thirty-one miles W.N.W. of the former.

² The "Sāgar and Nerbudda Territories," comprising the Sāgar, Jabalpur, Hoshangābād, Seonī, Damoh, Narsinghpur, and Baitūl Districts, are now under the Local Administration of the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, which was formed in 1861 by Lord Canning, who appointed Sir Richard Temple Chief Commissioner. These territories were at first administered by a semi-political agency, but were afterwards, in 1852, placed under the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, to whom they remained subject until 1861. They were ceded by the Marāthās to the British in 1818, and the cession was confirmed by the treaty of 1826.

³ All official presents given by native chiefs to the Governor-General are credited to the "toshakhāna," from which also are taken the official gifts bestowed in return.

purchased and presented to her in his name. The orders were given in her presence and mine. I was obliged to return to Sāgar before they could be carried into effect; and, when I returned in 1835,² I found that the *rejected* shawls had been presented to her, and were such coarse things that she was ashamed to wear them, as much, I really believe, on account of the exalted person who had given them, as her own. She never mentioned the subject till I asked her to let me see the shawls, which she did reluctantly, and she was too proud to complain. How the good intentions of the Governor-General had been frustrated in this case I have never learned. The native officer in charge of the store was dead, and the Governor-General's representative had left the place. Better could not, I suppose, be got at this time, and he did not like to defer giving them.

¹ By resolution of Government, dated 10th January, 1835, the author was appointed General Superintendent of the Operations against Thuggee, with his headquarters at Jubbulpore.

CHAPTER X

The Peasantry and the Land Settlement.

THE officers of the 29th had found game so plentiful, and the weather so fine, that they came on with us as far as Jaberā, where we had the pleasure of their society on the evening of the 24th, and left them on the morning of the 25th.¹ A great many of my native friends, from among the native landholders and merchants of the country, flocked to our camp at every stage to pay their respects, and bid me farewell, for they never expected to see me back among them again. They generally came out a mile or two to meet and escort us to our tents ; and much do I fear that my poor boy will never again, in any part of the world, have the blessings of Heaven so fervently invoked upon him by so many worthy and respectable men as met us at every stage on our way from Jubbulpore. I am much attached to the agricultural classes of India generally, and I have found among them some of the best men I have ever known. The peasantry in India have generally very good manners, and are exceedingly intelligent, from having so much more leisure and unreserved and easy intercourse with those above them. The constant habit of meeting and discussing subjects connected with their own interests, in their own fields, and “under their own fig-trees,” with their landlords and government functionaries of all kinds and degrees, prevents their ever feeling or appearing impudent or obtrusive ; though it certainly tends to give them stentorian voices, that often startle us when they come into our houses to discuss the same points with us.

¹ Nov. 1835.

Nine-tenths of the immediate cultivators of the soil in India are little farmers, who hold a lease for one or more years, as the case may be, of their lands, which they cultivate with their own stock. One of these cultivators, with a good plough and bullocks, and a good character, can always get good land on moderate terms from holders of villages.¹ Those cultivators are, I think, the best, who learn to depend upon their stock and character for favourable terms, hold themselves free to change their holdings when their leases expire, and pretend not to any hereditary right in the soil. The lands are, I think, best cultivated, and the society best constituted in India, where the holders of estates of villages have a feeling of permanent interest in them, an assurance of an hereditary right of property which is liable only to the payment of a moderate government demand, descends undivided by the law of primogeniture, and is unaffected by the common law, which prescribes the equal subdivision among children of landed as well as other private property, among the Hindoos and Muhammadans; and where the immediate cultivators hold the lands they till by no other law than that of common specific contract.

When I speak of holders of villages, I mean the holders of lands that belong to villages. The whole face of India is parcelled out into estates of villages.² The village communities are composed of those who hold and cultivate the land, the established village servants, priest, blacksmith, carpenter, accountant, washerman, basket-maker (whose wife is *ex-officio* the midwife of the little village community), potter, watchman, barber, shoemaker, &c.,

¹ This observation does not hold good in densely populated tracts, which are now numerous.

² These "estates of villages" are known by the Persian name of "mauza." The topographical division of the country into "mauzas," which may be also translated by the terms "townlands" or "townships," has developed spontaneously. Some "mauzas" are uninhabited, and are cultivated by the residents of neighbouring villages.

&c.¹ To these may be added the little banker, or agricultural capitalist, the shopkeeper, the brazier, the confectioner, the ironmonger, the weaver, the dyer, the astronomer, or astrologer, who points out to the people the lucky day for every earthly undertaking, and the prescribed times for all religious ceremonies and observances. In some villages the whole of the lands are parcelled out among cultivating proprietors, and are liable to eternal subdivisions by the law of inheritance, which gives to each son the same share. In others, the whole of the lands are parcelled out among cultivators, who hold them on a specific lease for limited periods from a proprietor who holds the whole collectively under government, at a rate of rent fixed either permanently or for limited periods. These are the two extremes. There are but few villages in which all the cultivators are considered as proprietors—at least but few in our Nerbudda territories; and these will almost invariably be found of a caste of Brahmans or a caste of Rājputs, descended from a common ancestor, to whom the estate was originally given in rent-free tenure, or at a quit-rent, by the existing government for his prayers as a priest, or his services as a soldier. Subsequent governments, which resumed unceremoniously the estates of others, were deterred from resuming these by a dread of the curses of

¹ In some parts of Central and Southern India, the “Gārpagrī,” who charms away hail-storms from the crops, and “Bhūmkā,” who charms away tigers from the people and their cattle, are added to the number of village servants. [W. H. S.] “In many parts of Berār and Mālwa every village has its ‘bhūmkā,’ whose office it is to charm the tigers; and its ‘gārpagrī,’ whose duty it is to keep off the hail-storms. They are part of the village servants, and paid by the village community. After a severe hail-storm took place in the district of Narsinghpur, of which I had the civil charge in 1823, the office of ‘gārpagrī’ was restored to several villages in which it had ceased for several generations. They are all Brahmans, and take advantage of such calamities to impress the people with an opinion of their usefulness. The ‘bhūmkās’ are all Gōnds, or people of the woods, who worship their own Lares and Penates.” (*Ramaseana*, Introduction, p. 13, note.)

the one and the swords of the other.¹ Such communities of cultivating proprietors are of two kinds, those among whom the lands are parcelled out, each member holding his share as a distinct estate, and being individually responsible for the payment of the share of the government demand assessed upon it; and those among whom the lands are not parcelled out, but the profits divided as among copartners of an estate held jointly. They, in either case, nominate one of their members to collect and pay the government demand; or government appoints a man for this duty, either as a salaried servant, or a lessee, with authority to levy from the cultivating proprietors a certain sum over and above what is demandable from him.

The communities in which the cultivators are considered merely as lease-holders are far more numerous; indeed, the greater part of the village communities in this part of India are of this description; and, where the communities are of a mixed character, the cultivating proprietors are considered to have merely a right of occupancy, and are liable to have their lands assessed at the same rate as those held on a mere lease tenure. In all parts of India the cultivating proprietors in such mixed communities are similarly situated; they are liable to be assessed at the same rate as others holding the same sort of lands, and often pay a higher rate, with which others are not encumbered. But this is not general; it is as much the interest of the proprietor to have good cultivating tenants, as it is that of the tenants to have good proprietors; and it is felt

¹ Very often the government of the country know nothing of these tenures; the local authorities allowed them to continue as a perquisite of their own. The holders were willing to pay them a good share of the rent, assured that they would be resumed if reported by the local authorities to the government. These authorities consented to take a moderate share of the rent, assured that they should get little or nothing if the lands were resumed. [W. H. S.] "Rent" here means "land-revenue." Of course, under modern British administration the particulars of all tenures are known and recorded in great detail.

to be the interest of both to adjust their terms amicably among themselves, without a reference to a third and superior party, which is always costly and commonly ruinous.¹

It is a question of very great importance, no less morally and politically than fiscally, which of these systems deserves most encouragement—that in which the government considers the immediate cultivators to be the hereditary proprietors, and, through its own public officers, parcels out the lands among them, and adjusts the rates of rent demandable from every minute partition, as the lands become more and more subdivided by the Hindoo and Muhammadan law of inheritance; or that in which the government considers him who holds the area of a whole village or estate collectively as the hereditary proprietor, and the immediate cultivators as his lease-tenants—leaving the rates of rent to be adjusted among the parties without the aid of public officers, or interposing only to enforce the fulfilment of their mutual contracts. In the latter of these two systems the land will supply more and better members to the middle and higher classes of the society, and create and preserve a better feeling between them and the peasantry, or immediate cultivators of the soil; and it will occasion the re-investment upon the soil, in works of ornament and utility, of a greater portion of the annual returns of rent and profit, and a less expenditure in the costs of litigation in our civil courts, and bribery to our public officers.

Those who advocate the other system, which makes the immediate cultivators the proprietors, will, for the most part, be found to reason upon false premises—upon the

¹ Since the author wrote these remarks the legal position of cultivating proprietors and tenants has been largely modified by the pressure of population and a long course of legislation. The Rent Acts, which began with Act X of 1859, are now numerous, and have been accompanied by a series of Land Revenue Acts, and many collateral enactments. All the problems of the Irish land question are familiar topics to the Anglo-Indian courts and legislature.

assumption that the rates of rent demandable from the immediate cultivators of the soil *were everywhere limited and established by immemorial usage, in a certain sum of money per acre, or a certain share of the crop produced from it*; and that "these rates were not only so limited and fixed, but everywhere *well known to the people*," and might, consequently, have become well known to the government, and recorded in public registers. Now every practical man in India, who has had opportunities of becoming well acquainted with the matter, knows that *the reverse is the case*; that the rate of rent demandable from these cultivators *never was the same upon any two estates at the same time: nor even the same upon any one estate at different times, or for any consecutive number of years*.¹ The rates vary every year on every estate, according to the varying circumstances that influence them—such as greater or less exhaustion of the soil, greater or less facilities of irrigation, manure, transit to market, drainage—or from fortuitous advantages on one hand, or calamities of season on the other; or many other circumstances which affect the value of the land, and the abilities of the cultivators to pay. It is not so much the proprietors of the estate or the government as the cultivators themselves who demand every year a readjustment of the rate demandable upon their different holdings. This readjustment must take place; and, if there is no landlord to effect it, government must effect it through its own officers. Every holding becomes subdivided when the cultivating proprietor dies, and leaves more than one child; and, as the whole face of the country is open and without hedges, the division is easily and speedily made. Thus the field-map which represents an estate one year will never represent it fairly five years after;

¹ This proposition was no doubt true for the "Sāgar and Nerbudda Territories" in 1835, but it cannot be predicated of the thickly populated and settled districts in the Gangetic valley without considerable qualification. Examples of long-established, unchanged, well-known rent-rates are not uncommon.

in fact, we might almost as well attempt to map the waves of the ocean as field-map the face of any considerable area in any part of India.¹

If there be any truth in my conclusions, our government has acted unwisely in going, as it has generally done, into [one or other of] the two extremes, in its settlement of the land revenue.

In the Zamindāri settlement of Bengal, it conferred the hereditary right of property over areas larger than English counties on individuals, and left the immediate cultivators mere tenants-at-will.² These individuals felt no interest in promoting the comfort and welfare of the village communities, or conciliating the affections of the cultivators, whom they never saw or wished to see; and they let out the village, or other subdivision of their estates, to second parties quite as little interested, who again let them out to others, so that the system of rack-renting went on over the whole area of the immense possession. This was a system "more honoured in the breach than in the observance";

¹ In recent years this task of "mapping the waves of the ocean" has been attempted. Every periodical settlement of the land revenue in Northern India since 1833 has been accompanied by the preparation of detailed village maps, showing each field, even the tiniest, a few yards square, with a separate number. In many cases these maps were roughly constructed under non-professional supervision, but in many districts they have been prepared by the cadastral branch of the Survey Department. The difficulty mentioned by the author has been severely felt, and it constantly happens that beautiful maps become useless in four or five years. Efforts are made to insert annual corrections in copies of the maps through the agency of the village accountants, and the "kānūngos," or officers who supervise them, but the task is an enormous one, and only partial success is attained. In addition to the maps, records of great bulk are annually prepared which give the most minute details about every holding and each field.

² The Permanent Settlement of Bengal was effected under the orders of Lord Cornwallis in 1793, and was soon after extended to the province of Benares, now included in the North-Western Provinces. Illusory provisions were made to protect the rights of tenants, but nothing at all effectual was done till Act X of 1859 was passed, which has been largely modified by later legislation.

for, as the great landholders became involved in the ruin of their cultivators, their estates were sold for arrears of revenue due to government, and thus the proprietary right of one individual has become divided among many, who will have the feelings which the larger holders wanted, and so remedy the evil. In the other extreme, government has constituted the immediate cultivators the proprietors; thereby preventing any one who is supported upon the rent of land, or the profits of agricultural stock, from rising above the grade of a peasant, and so depriving society of one of its best and most essential elements. The remedy of both is in village settlements, in which the estate shall be of moderate size, and the hereditary property of the holder, descending on the principle of a principality, by the right of primogeniture, unaffected by the common law. This is the system which has been adopted in the Nerbudda territory, and which, I trust, will be always adhered to.

When we enter upon the government of any new territorial acquisition in India, we do not require or pretend to change the civil laws of the people; because their civil laws and their religion are in reality one and the same, and are contained in one and the same code, as certainly among the Hindoos, the Muhammadans, and the Parsees, as they were among the Israelites. By these codes, and the established usages everywhere well understood by the people are their rights and duties in marriage, inheritance, succession, caste, contract, and all the other civil relations of life, ascertained; and, when we displace another government, we do not pretend to alter such rights and duties in relation to each other, we merely change the machinery and mode of procedure, by which these rights are secured, and these duties enforced.¹

¹ The general principle here stated of respect for personal law in civil matters is still the guide of the Indian Legislature, but the accumulation of High Court rulings and the action of codes have effected considerable gradual change in substantive civil law. Direct legislation has anglicized the law of contract, and has modified, though not so largely, the law of marriage, inheritance, and succession.

Of criminal law no system was ever either regularly established or administered in any state in India, by any government to which we have succeeded; and the people always consider the existing government free to adopt that which may seem best calculated to effect the one great object, which criminal law has everywhere in view—the *security of life, property, and character, and the enjoyment of all their advantages*. The actions by which these are affected and endangered, the evidence by which such actions require to be proved, and the penalties with which they require to be visited, in order to prevent their recurrence, are, or ought to be, so much the same in every society, that the people never think us bound to search for what Muhammad and his companions thought in the wilds of Arabia, or the Sanskrit poets sang about them in courts and cloisters. They would be just as well pleased everywhere to find us searching for these things in the writings of Confucius and Zoroaster, as in those of Muhammad and Manu: and much more so, to see us consulting our own common sense, and forming a penal code of our own, suitable to the wants of such a mixed community.¹

The fiscal laws which define the rights and duties of the landed interests and the agricultural classes in relation to each other and to the ruling powers were also everywhere exceedingly simple and well understood by the people. What in England is now a mere fiction of law is still in India an essential principle. All lands are held directly or indirectly of the sovereign: to this rule there is no exception.² The

¹ In the author's time the courts of the East India Company still followed the Muhammadan criminal law, as modified by the Regulations. The Indian Penal Code of 1859 placed the substantive criminal law on a thoroughly scientific basis. This code was framed with such masterly skill that to this day it has scarcely needed any material amendment. The first Criminal Procedure Code, passed in 1861, has been twice recast. The law of evidence was codified by Sir James FitzJames Stephen in the Indian Evidence Act of 1870.

² This proposition truly states the theory of land tenures in India, and was a generally accurate statement of actual fact in the author's

reigning sovereign is essentially the proprietor of the whole of the lands in every part of India, where he has not voluntarily alienated them; and he holds these lands for the payment of those public establishments which are maintained for the public good, and are supported by the rents of the lands either directly under assignment, or indirectly, through the sovereign proprietor. When a Muhammadan or Hindoo sovereign assigned lands rent-free in *perpetuity*, it was always understood, both by the donor and receiver, to be with the *small reservation* of a right in his successor to resume them for the public good, if he should think fit.¹ Hindoo sovereigns, or their priests for them, often tried to bar this right, by *invoking curses* on the head of that successor who should exercise it.² It

time. Since his time the long continuance of settled government has fostered the growth of private rights, and tends to obscure the idea of state ownership. The modern revenue codes, instead of postulating the ownership of the state, enact that the claims of the state, that is to say, the land-revenue, are the first charge on the land and its produce.

¹ Amīr Khān, the Nawāb of Tonk, assigned to his physician, who had cured him of an intermittent fever, lands yielding one thousand rupees a year, in rent-free tenure, and gave him a deed signed by himself and his heir-apparent, declaring expressly that it should descend to him and his heirs for ever. He died lately, and his son and successor, who had signed the deed, resumed the estate without ceremony. On being remonstrated with, he said that "his father, while living, was, of course, master, and could make him sign what he pleased, and give land rent-free to whom he pleased; but his successor must now be considered the best judge whether they could be spared or not; that if lands were to be alienated in perpetuity by every reigning Nawāb for every dose of medicine or dose of prayers that he or the members of his family required, none would soon be left for the payment of the soldiers, or other necessary public servants of any description." This was told me by the son of the old physician, who was the person to whom the speech was made, his father having died before Amīr Khān. [W. H. S.] Amīr Khān was the famous Pindhārī leader.

² The ancient deeds of grant, engraved on copper, of which so many have been published during the last fifty years, almost invariably conclude with fearful curses on the head of any rash mortal who may dare

is a proverb among the people of these territories, and, I believe, among the people of India generally, that the lands which pay no rent to government have no "barkat," blessing from above—that the man who holds them is not blessed in their returns like the man who pays rent to government, and thereby contributes his aid to the protection of the community. The fact is that every family that holds rent-free lands must, in a few generations, become miserable from the minute subdivision of the property, and the litigation in our civil courts which it entails upon the holders.¹ It is certainly the general opinion of the people of India that no land should be held without paying rent to government, or providing for people employed in the service of government, for the benefit of the people in its defensive, religious, judicial, educational, and other establishments. Nine-tenths of the land in these Nerbudda territories are held in lease immediately under government by the heads of villages, whose leases have been renewable every five years ; but they are now to have a settlement for twenty.² The other tenth is held by these heads of villages

to revoke the grant. Usually the pious hope is expressed that, if he should be guilty of such wickedness, he may rot in filth, and be reborn a worm.

¹ Revenue officers commonly observe that revenue-free grants, which the author calls rent-free, are often ill-cultivated. The simple reason is that the stimulus of the Collector's demand is wanting to make the owner exert himself.

² These leases now carry with them a right of ownership, involving the power of alienation, subject to the lien of the land-revenue as a first charge. Conversely, the modern codes lay down the principle that the revenue settlement must be made with the proprietor. The author's rule of agricultural succession by primogeniture in the Nerbudda territories can scarcely have survived to the present day, but I have no positive information on the subject. The land-revenue law and the law concerning the relations between landlords and tenants have now been more or less successfully codified in each province. Mr. B. H. Baden-Powell's encyclopædic work *The Land Systems of British India* (3 volumes : Oxford, Clarendon Press) gives very full information concerning Indian tenures as now existing, and the law applicable to them.

intermediately under some chief, who holds several portions of land immediately under government at a quit-rent, or for service performed, or to be performed, for government, and lets them out to farmers. These are, for the most part, situated in the more hilly and less cultivated parts.

CHAPTER XI

Witchcraft.

ON leaving Jabērā,¹ I saw an old acquaintance from the eastern part of the Jubbulpore district, Kehri Singh.

"I understand, Kehri Singh," said I, "that certain men among the Gonds of the jungle, towards the source of the Nerbudda, eat human flesh. Is it so?"

"No, sir; the men never eat people, but the Gond women do."

"Where?"

"Everywhere, sir; there is not a parish—nay, a village, among the Gonds, in which you will not find one or more such women."

"And how do they eat people?"

"They eat their livers, sir."

"Oh, I understand; you mean witches?"

"Of course! Who ever heard of other people eating human beings?"

"And you really still think, in spite of all that we have done and said, that there are such things as witches?"

"Of course we do—do not we find instances of it every day? European gentlemen are too apt to believe that things like this are not to be found here, because they are not to be found in their own country. Major Wardlow, when in charge of the Seonī district, denied the existence of witchcraft for a long time, but he was at last convinced."

"How?"

"One of his troopers, one morning after a long march,

¹ *Ante*, Chapter IX, p. 65.

took some milk for his master's breakfast from an old woman without paying for it. Before the major had got over his breakfast the poor trooper was down upon his back, screaming from the agony of internal pains. We all knew immediately that he had been bewitched, and recommended the major to send for some one learned in these matters to find out the witch. He did so, and, after hearing from the trooper the story about the milk, this person at once declared that the woman from whom he got it was the criminal. She was searched for, found, and brought to the trooper, and commanded to cure him. She flatly denied that she had herself conjured him; but admitted that her household gods might, unknown to her, have punished him for his wickedness. This, however, would not do. She was commanded to cure the man, and she set about collecting materials for the "pūjā" (worship); and before she could get quite through the ceremonies, all his pains had left him. Had we not been resolute with her, the man must have died before evening, so violent were his torments."

"Did not a similar case occur to Mr. Fraser at Jubbulpore?"

"A 'chaprāsī'¹ of his, while he had charge of the Jubbulpore district, was sent out to Mandlā² with a message of some kind or other. He took a cock from an old Gond woman without paying for it, and, being hungry after a long journey, ate the whole of it in a curry. He heard the woman mutter something, but being a raw, unsuspecting young man, he thought nothing of it, ate his cock, and went to sleep. He had not been asleep three hours before he was seized with internal pains, and the old cock was actually heard crowing in his belly. He made the best of his way back to Jubbulpore, several stages, and all the most skilful men were employed to charm away the effect of the

¹ An orderly, or official messenger, who wears a "chaprās," or badge of office.

² On the Nerbudda, 50 miles S.E. of Jubbulpore.

old woman's spell, but in vain. He died, and the cock never ceased crowing at intervals up to the hour of his death."

"And was Mr. Fraser convinced?"

"I never heard, but suppose he must have been."

"Who ate the livers of the victims? The witches themselves, or the evil spirits with whom they had dealings?"

"The evil spirits ate the livers, but they are set on to do so by the witches, who get them into their power by such accursed sacrifices and offerings. They will often dig up young children from their graves, bring them to life, and allow these devils to feed upon their livers, as falconers allow their hawks to feed on the breasts of pigeons. You 'sāhib lōg' (European gentlemen) will not believe all this, but it is, nevertheless, all very true."¹

The belief in sorcery among these people owes its origin, in a great measure, to the diseases of the liver and spleen, to which the natives, and particularly the children, are much subject in the jungly parts of Central India. From these affections children pine away and die, without showing any external marks of disease. Their death is attributed to witchcraft, and any querulous old woman, who has been in the habit of murmuring at slights and ill-treatment in the neighbourhood, is immediately set down as the cause. Men who practice medicine among them are very commonly supposed to be at the same time wizards. Seeking to inspire confidence in their prescriptions by repeating prayers and incantations over the patient, or over the medicine they give him, they make him believe that they derive aid from supernatural power; and the patient concludes that those who can command these powers to

¹ Of the supposed powers and dispositions of witches among the Romans we have horrible pictures in the 5th Ode of the 5th Book of Horace, and in the 6th Book of Lucan's *Pharsalia*. [W. H. S.] The reference to Horace should be to the 5th Epode. The passage in the *Pharsalia*, Book VI, lines 420-830, describes the proceedings of Thesalian witches.

cure can, if they will, command them to *destroy*. He and his friends believe that the man who can command these powers to cure one individual can command them to cure any other ; and, if he does not do so, they believe that it arises from a desire to destroy the patient. I have, in these territories, known a great many instances of medical practitioners having been put to death for not curing young people for whom they were required to prescribe. Several cases have come before me as a magistrate in which the father has stood over the doctor with a drawn sword by the side of the bed of his child, and cut him down and killed him the moment the child died, as he had sworn to do when he found the patient sinking under his prescriptions.¹

The town of Jubbulpore contains a population of twenty thousand souls,² and they all believed in this story of the cock. I one day asked a most respectable merchant in the town, Nādū Chaudhrī, how the people could believe in such things, when he replied that he had no doubt witches were to be found in every part of India, though they abounded most, no doubt, in the central parts of it, and that we ought to consider ourselves very fortunate in having no such things in England. "But," added he, "of all countries that between Mandlā and Katāk (Cuttack)³ is the worst for witches. I had once occasion to go to the city of Ratanpur⁴ on business, and was one day, about noon, walking in the market-place and eating a very fine piece of sugar-cane. In the crowd I happened, by accident, to jostle an old woman as she passed me. I looked back, intending to apologize for the accident, and heard

¹ Such awkward incidents of medical practice are not heard of nowadays.

² The population of Jabalpur (including Cantonments) in 1891 was 84,556.

³ Katāk, or Cuttack, a district, with town of same name, in Orissa.

⁴ In the Bilāspur district of the Central Provinces. The distance in a direct line between Mandlā and Katāk is about 400 miles.

her muttering indistinctly as she passed on. Knowing the propensities of these old ladies, I became somewhat uneasy, and on turning round to my cane I found, to my great terror, that the juice had been all *turned to blood*. Not a minute had elapsed, such were the fearful powers of this old woman. I collected my followers, and, leaving my agents there to settle my accounts, was beyond the boundaries of the old wretch's influence before dark ; had I remained, nothing could have saved me. I should certainly have been a dead man before morning. It is well known," said the old gentleman, "that their spells and curses can only reach a certain distance, ten or twelve miles ; and, if you offend one of them, the sooner you place that distance between you the better."

Jangbār Khān, the representative of the Shāhgarh Rājā,¹ as grave and reverend an old gentleman as ever sat in the senate of Venice, told me one day that he was himself an eye-witness of the powers of the women of Khilautī. He was with a great concourse of people at a fair held at the town of Rāipur,² and, while sauntering with many other strangers in the fair, one of them began bargaining with two women of middle age for some very fine sugar-canes. They asked double the fair price for their canes. The man got angry, and took up one of them, when the women seized the other end, and a struggle ensued. The purchaser offered a fair price, seller demanded double. The crowd looked on, and a good deal of abuse of the female relations on both sides took place. At last a "sipāhī" (sepoy) of the governor came up, armed to the

¹ Shāhgarh was formerly a petty native state, with town of same name. The chief joined the rebels in 1857, with the result that his dominions were confiscated, and distributed between the districts of Sāgar and Damoh in the Central Provinces, and Lalitpur in the North-Western Provinces. The town of Shāhgarh is in the Sāgar district.

² Rāipur is the chief town of the district of the same name in the Central Provinces, which was not finally annexed to the British dominions until 1854, when the Nāgpur State lapsed.

teeth, and called out to the man, in a very imperious tone, to let go his hold of the cane. He refused, saying that "when people came to the fair to sell, they should be made to sell at reasonable prices, or be turned out." "I," said Jangbār Khān, "thought the man right, and told the 'sipāhī' that, if he took the part of this woman, we should take that of the other, and see fair play. Without further ceremony the functionary drew his sword, and cut the cane in two in the middle; and, pointing to both pieces, 'there,' said he, 'you see the cause of my interference.' We looked down, and actually saw blood running from both pieces, and forming a little pool on the ground. The fact was that the woman was a sorceress of the very worst kind, and was actually drawing the blood from the man through the cane, to feed the abominable devil from whom she derived her detestable powers. But for the timely interference of the 'sipāhī,' he would have been dead in another minute; for he no sooner saw the real state of the case than he fainted. He had hardly any blood left in him, and I was afterwards told that he was not able to walk for ten days. We all went to the governor to demand justice, declaring that, unless the women were made an example of at once, the fair would be deserted, for no stranger's life would be safe. He consented, and they were both sewn up in sacks and thrown into the river; but they had conjured the water and would not sink. They ought to have been put to death, but the governor was himself afraid of this kind of people, and let them off. There is not," continued Jangbār, "a village, or a single family, without its witch in that part of the country; indeed, no man will give his daughter in marriage to a family without one, saying, 'If my daughter has children, what will become of them without a witch to protect them from the witches of other families in the neighbourhood?' It is a fearful country, though the cheapest and most fertile in India."

We can easily understand how a man, impressed with the idea that his blood had all been drawn from him by a

sorceress, should become faint, and remain many days in a languid state ; but, how the people around should believe that they saw the blood flowing from both parts of the cane at the place cut through, it is not so easy to conceive.

I am satisfied that old Jangbār believed the whole story to be true, and that at the time he thought the juice of the cane red ; but the little pool of blood grew, no doubt, by degrees, as years rolled on and he related this tale of the fearful powers of the Khilauti witches.



CHAPTER XII

The Silver Tree, or "Kalpa Briksha"—The Singhāra or *Trapa bispinosa*, and the Guinea-Worm.

POOR old Salāmat Ali wept bitterly at the last meeting in my tent, and his two nice boys, without exactly knowing why, began to do the same; and my little son Henry¹ caught the infection, and wept louder than any of them. I was obliged to hurry over the interview lest I should feel disposed to do the same. The poor old Rānī,² too, suffered a good deal in parting from my wife, whom, she says, she can never hope to see again. Her fine large eyes shed many a tear as she was getting into her palankeen to return.

Between Jaberā and Harduā, the next stage, we find a great many of those large forest trees called "kalap," or "Kalpa Briksha" (the same which in the paradise of Indra grants what is desired), with a soft, silvery bark, and scarcely any leaves. We are told that the name of the god Rām (Rāma) and his consort Sitā will be found written by the hand of God upon all.³

I had the curiosity to examine a good many in the forest on both sides of the road, and found the name of this incarnation of Vishnu written on every one in Sanskrit

¹ Afterwards Captain H. A. Sleeman, now (1893) employed under the Board of Trade.

² Of Garhā, see *anie*, Chapter IX, p. 69.

³ The real "kalpa," which now stands in the garden of the god Indra in the first heaven, was one of the fourteen varieties found at the churning of the ocean by the gods and demons. It fell to the share of Indra. [W. H. S.] The tree referred to in the text seems to be the *Erythrina arborescens*, or coral-tree, which sheds its leaves after the hot weather.

characters, apparently by some supernatural hand ; that is, there was a softness in the impression, as if the finger of some supernatural being had traced the characters. Nathū, one of our belted attendants,¹ told me that we might search as deeply as we would in the forest, but we should certainly find the name of God upon every one ; “for,” said he, “it is God himself who writes it.” I tried to argue him out of this notion ; but, unfortunately, could find no tree without these characters—some high up, and some lower down in the trunk—some large and others small—but still to be found on every tree. I was almost in despair when we came to a part of the wood where we found one of these trees down in a hollow, under the road, and another upon the precipice above. I was ready to stake my credit upon the probability that no traveller would take the trouble to go up to the tree above, or down to the tree below, merely to write the name of the god upon them ; and at once pledged myself to Nathū that he should find neither the god’s name nor that of his wife. I sent one man up, and another man down, and they found no letters on the trees ; but this did not alter their opinion on the point. “God,” said one, “had no doubt put his name on these trees, but they had somehow or other got rubbed off. He would in good time renew them, that men’s eyes might be blessed with the sight of his holy name, even in the deepest forest, and on the most leafless tree.”² “But,” said Nathū, “he might not have thought

¹ that is to say, orderlies, or “chaprāsīs.”

² Every Hindoo is thoroughly convinced that the names of Rām and his consort Sītā are written on this tree by the hand of God, and nine-tenths of the Musalmāns believe the same.

“Happy the man who sees a God employed
In all the good and ill that chequer life,
Resolving all events, with their effects
And manifold results, into the will
And arbitration wise of the Supreme.”

COWPER. [W. H. S.]

The quotation is from the *Task*, Book II, line 161.



it worth while to write his name upon those trees which no travellers go to see." "Cannot you see," said I, "that these letters have been engraved by man? Are they not all to be found on the trunk within reach of a man's hand?" "Of course they are," replied he, "because people would not be able conveniently to distinguish them if God were to write them higher up."

Shaikh Sādī has a very pretty couplet, "Every leaf of the foliage of a green tree is, in the eye of a wise man, a library to teach him the wisdom of his Creator."¹ I may remark that, where an Englishman would write his own name, a Hindoo would write that of his god, his parent, or his benefactor. This difference is traceable, of course, to the difference in their governments and institutions. If a Hindoo built a town, he called it after his local governor; if a local governor built it, he called it after the favourite son of the Emperor. In well-regulated Hindoo families, one cannot ask a younger brother after his children in presence of the elder brother who happens to be the head of the family; it would be disrespectful for him even to speak of his children as his own in such presence—the elder brother relieves his embarrassment by answering for him.

On the 27th² we reached Damoh,³ where our friends, the

¹ Sādī is the poetic name, or *nom de plume*, of the celebrated Persian poet, whose proper name is said to have been Shaikh Muslih-ud-dīn, or, according to other authorities, Sharf-ud-dīn Mislāh. He was born about A.D. 1194, and is supposed to have lived for more than a hundred years. Some writers say that he died in A.D. 1292. His best known works are the *Gulistān* and *Būstān*. The editor has failed to trace in either of these works the couplet quoted. Sādī says in the *Gulistān*, ii. 26, "That heart which has an ear is full of the divine mystery. It is not the nightingale that alone serenades his rose; for every thorn on the rose-bush is a tongue in his or God's praise." (Ross' translation.)

² Nov. 1835.

³ Spelled Dhamow in the author's text. The town, the headquarters of the district of the same name, is forty-five miles east of Sāgar, and fifty-five miles north-west of Jabalpur. The Gazetteer states the population to be 8,563. Inscriptions of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries at Damoh are noticed in *Archæol. Rep.*, vol. xxi, p. 168.

Browns, were to leave us on their return to Jubbulpore. Damoh is a pretty place. The town contains some five or six thousand people, and has some very handsome Hindoo temples. On a hill immediately above it is the shrine of a Muhammadan saint, which has a very picturesque appearance.

There are no manufactures at Damoh, except such as supply the wants of the immediate neighbourhood ; and the town is supported by the residence of a few merchants, a few landholders, and agricultural capitalists, and the establishment of a native collector. The people here suffer much from the guinea-worm, and consider it to arise from drinking the water of the old tank, which is now very dirty and full of weeds. I have no doubt that it is occasioned either by drinking the water of this tank, or by wading in it : for I have known European gentlemen get the worm in their legs from wading in similar lakes or swamps after snipes, and the servants who followed them with their ammunition experience the same effect.¹ Here, as in most other parts of India, the tanks get spoiled by the water-chestnut, “singhāra” (*Trapa bispinosa*), which is everywhere as regularly planted and cultivated *in fields* under a large surface of water, as wheat or barley is on the dry plains. It is cultivated by a class of men called Dhīmars, who are everywhere fishermen and palankeen bearers ; and they keep boats for the planting, weeding, and gathering the “singhāra.”² The holdings or tenements of each cultivator are marked out carefully on the surface of the water by long bamboos stuck up in it ; and they pay so much the acre for the portion they till. The long straws of the plants reach up to the surface of the waters, upon which

¹ The guinea-worm (*Filaria medinensis*) is a very troublesome parasite, which sometimes grows to a length of three feet. It occurs in Africa, Arabia, Persia, and Turkistan, as well as in India.

² The Dhīmars are the same caste as the Kahārs, or “bearers.” The boats used by them are commonly “dug-out” canoes, exactly like those used in prehistoric Europe, and now treasured in museums.

float their green leaves ; and their pure white flowers expand beautifully among them in the latter part of the afternoon. The nut grows under the water after the flowers decay, and is of a triangular shape, and covered with a tough brown integument adhering strongly to the kernel, which is white, esculent, and of a fine cartilaginous texture. The people are very fond of these nuts, and they are carried often upon bullocks' backs two or three hundred miles to market. They ripen in the latter end of the rains, or in September, and are eatable till the end of November. The rent paid for an ordinary tank by the cultivator is about one hundred rupees a year. I have known two hundred rupees to be paid for a very large one, and even three hundred, or thirty pounds a year.¹ But the mud increases so rapidly from this cultivation that it soon destroys all reservoirs in which it is permitted ; and, where it is thought desirable to keep up the tank for the sake of the water, it should be carefully prohibited. This is done by stipulating with the renter of the village, at the renewal of the lease, that no "singhāra" shall be planted in the tank ; otherwise, he will never forego the advantage to himself of the rent for the sake of the convenience, and that only prospective, of the village community in general.

¹ In the author's time the rupee was worth two shillings, or more. Now, it is difficult to say what it is worth.

CHAPTER XIII

Thugs and Poisoners.

LIEUTENANT BROWN had come on to Damoh chiefly with a view to investigate a case of murder, which had taken place at the village of Sujaina, about ten miles from Damoh, on the road to Hattā.¹ A gang of two hundred Thugs were encamped in the grove at Hindoria in the cold season of 1814, when, early in the morning, seven men well armed with swords and matchlocks passed them, bearing treasure from the bank of Motī Kochia at Jubbulpore to their correspondents at Bānda,² to the value of four thousand five hundred rupees.³ The value of their burthen was immediately perceived by these *keen-eyed sportsmen*, and Kosarī, Drigpāl, and Faringia, three of the leaders, with forty of their fleetest and stoutest followers, were immediately selected for the pursuit. They followed seven miles unperceived; and, coming up with the treasure-bearers in a water-course half a mile from the village of Sujaina, they rushed in upon them and put them all to death with their swords.⁴ While they were doing so a tanner from Sujaina

¹ A town on the Allahabad and Sāgar road, 61 miles N.E. of Sāgar. It was the headquarters of the Damoh district from 1818 to 1835.

² The chief town of the district of the same name in Bundēlkhand, situated on the Kēn river, 95 miles S.W. from Allahabad.

³ Worth at that time £450 sterling, or a little more.

⁴ An unusual mode of procedure for professed Thugs to adopt, who usually strangle their victims with a cloth. Faringia Brahman was one of the most noted Thug leaders. He is frequently mentioned in the author's *Report on the Depredations committed by the Thug Gangs* (1840), and the story of the Sujaina crime is fully told in the Introduction to that volume. Faringia became a valuable approver.

approached with his buffalo, and to prevent him giving the alarm they put him to death also, and made off with the treasure, leaving the bodies unburied. A heavy shower of rain fell, and none of the village people came to the place till the next morning early; when some females, passing it on their way to Hattā, saw the bodies, and returning to Sujaina, reported the circumstance to their friends. The whole village thereupon flocked to the spot, and the body of the tanner was burned by his relations with the usual ceremonies, while all the rest were left to be eaten by jackals, dogs and vultures, who make short work of such things in India.¹

¹ Lieutenant Brown was suddenly called back to Jubbulpore, and could not himself go to Sujaina. He sent, however, an intelligent native officer to the place, but no man could be induced to acknowledge that he had ever seen the bodies or heard of the affair, though Faringia pointed out to them exactly where they all lay. They said it must be quite a mistake—that such a thing could not have taken place and they know nothing of it. Lieutenant Brown was aware that all this affected ignorance arose entirely from the dread these people have of being summoned to give evidence to any of our district courts of justice; and wrote to the officer in the civil charge of the district to request that he would assure them that their presence would not be required. Mr. Doolan, the assistant magistrate, happened to be going through Sujaina from Sāgar on deputation at the time; and, sending for all the respectable old men of the place, he requested that they would be under no apprehension, but tell him the real truth, as he would pledge himself that not one of them should ever be summoned to any district court to give evidence. They then took him to the spot and pointed out to him where the bodies had been found, and mentioned that the body of the tanner had been burned by his friends. The banker, whose treasure they had been carrying, had an equal dislike to be summoned to court to give evidence, now that he could no longer hope to recover any portion of his lost money; and it was not till after Lieutenant Brown had given him a similar assurance, that he would consent to have his books examined. The loss of the four thousand five hundred rupees was then found entered, with the names of the men who had been killed at Sujaina in carrying it. These are specimens of some of the minor difficulties we had to contend with in our efforts to put down the most dreadful of all crimes. All the prisoners accused of these murders had just been tried for others, or

We had occasion to examine a very respectable old gentleman at Damoh upon the case, Gobind Dās, a revenue officer under the former government,¹ and now about seventy years of age. He told us that he had no knowledge whatever of the murder of the eight men at Sujaina; but he well remembered another which took place seven years before the time we mentioned at Abhāna, a stage or two back, on the road to Jubbulpore. Seventeen treasure-bearers lodged in the grove near that town on their way from Jubbulpore to Sāgar. At night they were set upon by a large gang of Thugs, and sixteen of them strangled; but the seventeenth laid hold of the noose before it could be brought to bear upon his throat, pulled down the villain who held it, and made his way good to the town. The Rājā, Dharak Singh, went to the spot with all the followers he could collect; but he found there nothing but the sixteen naked bodies lying in the grove, with their eyes apparently starting out of their sockets. The Thugs had all gone off with the treasure and their clothes, and the Rājā searched for them in vain.

A native commissioned officer of a regiment of native infantry one day told me that, while he was on duty over some Thugs at Lucknow, one of them related with great seeming pleasure the following case, which seemed to him one of the most remarkable that he had heard them speak of during the time they were under his charge.

“A stout Mogul² officer of noble bearing and singularly handsome countenance, on his way from the Punjab to Oudh, crossed the Ganges at Garhmuktesar Ghāt, near Lieutenant Brown would not have been able to give the pledge he did. [W. H. S.] Difficulties of the same kind beset the administration of criminal justice in India to this day.

¹ Of the Marāthās. The district was ceded in 1818.

² More correctly written Mughal. The term is properly applied to Muhammadans of Turk (Mongol) descent. Such persons commonly affix the title Beg to their names, and often prefix the Persian title Mirzā.

Meerut, to pass through Murādābād and Bareilly.¹ He was mounted on a fine Tūrki horse, and attended by his "khidmatgār" (butler) and groom. Soon after crossing the river, he fell in with a small party of well-dressed and modest-looking men going the same road. They accosted him in a respectful manner, and attempted to enter into conversation with him. He had heard of Thugs, and told them to be off. They smiled at his idle suspicions, and tried to remove them, but in vain. The Mogul was determined; they saw his nostrils swelling with indignation, took their leave, and followed slowly. The next morning he overtook the same number of men, but of a different appearance, all Musalmāns. They accosted him in the same respectful manner; talked of the danger of the road, and the necessity of their keeping together, and taking advantage of the protection of any mounted gentleman that happened to be going the same way. The Mogul officer said not a word in reply, resolved to have no companions on the road. They persisted—his nostrils began again to swell, and putting his hand to his sword, he bid them all be off, or he would have their heads from their shoulders. He had a bow and quiver full of arrows over his shoulders,² a brace of loaded pistols in his waist-belt, and a sword by his side, and was altogether a very formidable-looking cavalier. In the evening another party that lodged in the same "sarāi"³ became very intimate with the butler and groom. They were going the same road; and, as the Mogul overtook them in the morning,

¹ Meerut, the well-known cantonment, in the district of the same name. The name is written Meeruth by the author, and may be also written Mīrath. Ghāt (ghaut) means a ferry, or crossing-place. Murādābād and Bareilly (Bareli) are in Rohilkhand. The latter has a considerable garrison. Both places are large cities, and the headquarters of districts.

² The bow and quiver are now never seen, except, possibly, in remote parts of Rājputāna.

³ An inn of the Oriental pattern, often called caravanserai in books of travel.

they made their bows respectfully, and began to enter into conversation with their two friends, the groom and butler, who were coming up behind. The Mogul's nostrils began again to swell, and he bid the strangers be off. The groom and butler interceded, for their master was a grave, sedate man, and they wanted companions. All would not do, and the strangers fell in the rear. The next day, when they had got to the middle of an extensive and uninhabited plain, the Mogul in advance, and his two servants a few hundred yards behind, he came up to a party of six poor Musalmāns, sitting weeping by the side of a dead companion. They were soldiers from Lahore,¹ on their way to Lucknow, worn down by fatigue in their anxiety to see their wives and children once more, after a long and painful service. Their companion, the hope and prop of his family, had sunk under the fatigue, and they had made a grave for him; but they were poor unlettered men, and unable to repeat the funeral service from the holy Korān—would his highness but perform this last office for them, he would, no doubt, find his reward in this world and the next. The Mogul dismounted—the body had been placed in its proper position, with its head towards Mecca. A carpet was spread—the Mogul took off his bow and quiver, then his pistols and sword, and placed them on the ground near the body—called for water, and washed his feet, hands, and face, that he might not pronounce the holy words in an unclean state. He then knelt down and began to repeat the funeral service, in a clear, loud voice. Two of the poor soldiers knelt by him, one on each side in silence. The other four went off a few paces to beg that the butler and groom would not come so near as to interrupt the good Samaritan at his devotions.

All being ready, one of the four, in a low undertone, gave the "jhirmī" (signal),² the handkerchiefs were thrown

¹ Then the capital of Ranjit Singh, the great Sikh chief.

² "This is commonly given either by the leader of the gang, or the *belhā*, who has chosen the place for the murder." It was

over their necks, and in a few minutes all three—the Mogul and his servants—were dead, and lying in the grave in the usual manner, the head of one at the feet of the one below him. All the parties they had met on the road belonged to a gang of Jamāldehī Thugs, of the kingdom of Oudh.¹ In despair of being able to win the Mogul's confidence in the usual way, and determined to have the money and jewels, which they knew he carried with him, they had adopted this plan of disarming him; dug the grave by the side of the road, in the open plain, and made a handsome young Musalmān of the party the dead soldier. The Mogul, being a very stout man, died almost without a struggle, as is usually the case with such; and his two servants made no resistance."

People of great sensibility, with hearts overcharged with sorrow, often appear cold and callous to those who seem to them to feel no interest in their afflictions. An instance of this kind I will here mention; it is one of thousands that I have met with in my Indian rambles. It was mentioned to me one day that an old "fakir,"² who lived in a small hut close by a little shrine on the side of the road near the town of Morādābād, had lately lost his son, poisoned by a party of "datūriās," or professional poisoners,³ that now infest every road throughout India. I sent for him, and requested him to tell me his story, as I might perhaps be able to trace the murderers. He did so,

usually some commonplace order, such as "Bring the tobacco." (*Ramaseeana*, p. 99, etc.)

¹ The Jamāldehī Thugs resided "in Oude and some other parts east of the Ganges. They are considered very clever and expert, and more staunch to their oath of secrecy than most other classes." (*Ibid.* p. 97.)

² Fakir (fakeer), a religious mendicant. The word properly applies to Muhammadans only, but is often laxly used to include Hindoo ascetics.

³ So called because the poison they use is made of the seeds of the "datūra" plant (*Datura alba*), and other species of the same genus. It is a powerful narcotic.

and a Persian writer took it down while I listened with all the coldness of a magistrate, who wanted merely to learn facts, and have nothing whatever to do with feelings. This is his story literally :—

“I reside in my hut by the side of the road a mile and [a] half from the town, and live upon the bounty of travellers, and the people of the surrounding villages. About six weeks ago, I was sitting by the side of my shrine after saying prayers, with my only son, about ten years of age, when a man came up with his wife, his son, and his daughter, the one a little older, and the other a little younger than my boy. They baked and ate their bread near my shrine, and gave me flour enough to make two cakes. This I prepared and baked. My boy was hungry, and ate one cake and a half. I ate only half a one, for I was not hungry. I had a few days before purchased a new blanket for my boy, and it was hanging in a branch of the tree that shaded the shrine, when these people came. My son and I soon became stupefied. I saw him fall asleep, and I soon followed. I awoke again in the evening, and found myself in a pool of water. I had sense enough to crawl towards my boy. I found him still breathing, and I sat by him with his head in my lap, where he soon died. It was now evening, and I got up, and wandered about all night picking straws—I know not why. I was not yet quite sensible. During the night the wolves ate my poor boy. I heard this from travellers, and went and gathered up his bones and buried them in the shrine. I did not quite recover till the third day, when I found that some washerwomen had put me into the pool, and left me there with my head out, in hopes that this would revive me; but they had no hope of my son. I was then taken to the police of the town; but the landholders had begged me to say nothing about the poisoners, lest it might get them and their village community into trouble. The man was tall and fair, and about thirty-five; the woman short, stout, and fair, and about thirty; two of her teeth

projected a good deal ; the boy's eyelids were much diseased."

All this he told me without the slightest appearance of emotion, for he had not seen any appearance of it in me, or my Persian writer ; and a casual European observer would perhaps have exclaimed, "What brutes these natives are ! This fellow feels no more for the loss of his only son than he would for that of a goat." But I knew the feeling was there. The Persian writer put up his paper, and closed his inkstand, and the following dialogue, word for word, took place between me and the old man :—

Question.—What made you conceal the real cause of your boy's death, and tell the police that he had been killed, as well as eaten, by wolves ?

Answer.—The landholders told me that they could never bring back my boy to life, and the whole village would be worried to death by them if I made any mention of the poison.

Question.—And if they were to be punished for this they would annoy you ?

Answer.—Certainly. But I believed they advised me for my own good as well as their own.

Question.—And if they should turn you away from that place, could you not make another ?

Answer.—Are not the bones of my poor boy there, and the trees that he and I planted and watched together for ten years ?

Question.—Have you no other relations ? What became of your boy's mother ?

Answer.—She died at that place when my boy was only three months old. I have brought him up myself from that age ; he was my only child, and he has been poisoned for the sake of the blanket ! (Here the poor old man sobbed as if his heartstrings would break ; and I was obliged to make him sit down on the floor while I walked up and down the room.)

Question.—Had you any children before ?

Answer.—Yes, sir, we had several, but they all died before their mother. We had been reduced to beggary by misfortunes, and I had become too weak and ill to work. I buried my poor wife's bones by the side of the road where she died ; raised the little shrine over them, planted the trees, and there have I sat ever since by her side, with our poor boy in my bosom. It is a sad place for wolves, and we used often to hear them howling outside ; but my poor boy was never afraid of them when he knew I was near him. God preserved him to me, till the sight of the new blanket, for I had nothing else in the world, made these people poison us. I bought it for him only a few days before, when the rains were coming on, out of my savings—it was all I had. (The poor old man sobbed again, and sat down while I paced the room, lest I should sob also ; my heart was becoming a little too large for its apartment.) “I will never,” continued he, “quit the bones of my wife and child, and the tree that he and I watered for so many years. I have not many years to live ; there I will spend them, whatever the landholders may do—they advised me for my own good, and will never turn me out.”

I found all the poor man stated to be true ; the man and his wife had mixed poison with the flour to destroy the poor old man and his son for the sake of the new blanket which they saw hanging in the branch of the tree, and carried away with them. The poison used on such occasions is commonly the datura, and it is sometimes given in the hookah to be smoked, and at others in food. When they require to poison children as well as grown-up people, or women who do not smoke, they mix up the poison in food. The intention is almost always to destroy life, as “dead men tell no tales” ; but the poisoned people sometimes recover, as in the present case, and lead to the detection of the poisoners. The cases in which they recover are, however, rare, and of those who recover few are ever able to trace the poisoners ; and, of those who recover and

trace them, very few will ever undertake to prosecute them through the several courts of the magistrate, the sessions, and that of last instance in a distant district, to which the proceedings must be sent for final orders.

The impunity with which this crime is everywhere perpetrated, and its consequent increase in every part of India, are among the greatest evils with which the country is at this time affected. These poisoners are spread all over India, and are as numerous over the Bombay and Madras Presidencies as over that of Bengal. There is no road free from them, and throughout India there must be many hundreds who gain their subsistence by this trade alone. They put on all manner of disguises to suit their purpose; and, as they prey chiefly upon the poorer sort of travellers, they require to destroy the greater number of lives to make up their incomes. A party of two or three poisoners have very often succeeded in destroying another of eight or ten travellers with whom they have journeyed for some days, by pretending to give them a feast on the celebration of the anniversary of some family event. Sometimes an old woman or man will manage the thing alone, by gaining the confidence of travellers, and getting near the cooking-pots while they go aside; or when employed to bring the flour for the meal from the bazaar. The poison is put into the flour or the pot, as opportunity offers.

People of all castes and callings take to this trade, some casually, others for life, and others derive it from their parents or teachers. They assume all manner of disguises to suit their purposes; and the habits of cooking, eating, and sleeping on the side of the road, and smoking with strangers of seemingly the same caste, greatly facilitate their designs upon travellers. The small parties are unconnected with each other, and two parties never unite in the same cruise. The members of one party may be sometimes convicted and punished, but their conviction is accidental, for the system which has enabled us to put down the Thug associations cannot be applied, with any fair pros-

pect of success, to the suppression of these pests to society.¹

The Thugs went on their adventures in large gangs, and two or more were commonly united in the course of an expedition in the perpetration of many murders. Every man shared in the booty according to the rank he held in the gang, or the part he took in the murders; and the rank of every man and the part he took generally, or in any particular murder, were generally well known to all. From among these gangs, when arrested, we found the evidence we required for their conviction—or the means of tracing it—among the families and friends of their victims, or with persons to whom the property taken had been disposed of, and in the graves to which the victims had been consigned.

To give an idea of the system by which the government of India has been enabled to effect so great a good for the people as the suppression of these associations, I will suppose that two sporting gentlemen, A at Delhi, and B in Calcutta, had both described the killing of a tiger in an island in the Ganges, near Hardwār,² and mentioned the names of the persons engaged with them. Among the persons thus named were C, who had since returned to America, D, who had retired to New South Wales, E to England, and F to Scotland. There were four other persons named who were still in India, but they are deeply interested in A and B's story not being believed. A says that B got the skin of the tiger, and B states that he gave it to C, who cut out two of the claws. Application is made to C, D, E, and F, and without the possi-

¹ The crime of poisoning travellers is still prevalent, and its detection is still attended by the difficulties described in the text. The poisoning of cattle by arsenic, for the sake of their hides, was very prevalent twenty years ago, especially in the districts near Benares, but is now little heard of. It was checked under the ordinary law by numerous convictions and severe sentences.

² In the Sahāranpur district, where the Ganges issues from the hills.

bility of any collusion, or even communication between them, their statements correspond precisely with those of A and B, as to the time, place, circumstances, and persons engaged. Their statements are sworn to before magistrates in presence of witnesses, and duly attested. C states that he got the skin from B, and gave it to the Nawāb of Rāmpur¹ for a hookah carpet, but that he took from the left forefoot two of the claws, and gave them to the minister of the King of Oudh for a charm for his sick child.

The Nawāb of Rāmpur, being applied to, states that he received the skin from C, at the time and place mentioned, and that he still smokes his hookah upon it ; and that it had lost the two claws upon the left forefoot. The minister of the King of Oudh states that he received the two claws nicely set in gold ; that they had cured his boy, who still wore them round his neck to guard him from the evil eye. The goldsmith states that he set the two claws in gold for C, who paid him handsomely for his work. The peasantry, whose cattle graze on the island, declare that certain gentlemen did kill a tiger there about the time mentioned, and that they saw the body after the skin had been taken off, and the vultures had begun to descend upon it.

To prove that what A and B had stated could not possibly be true, the other party appeal to some of their townsmen, who are said to be well acquainted with their characters. They state that they really know nothing about the matter in dispute ; that their friends, who are opposed to A and B, are much liked by their townspeople and neighbours, as they have plenty of money, which they spend freely, but that they are certainly very much addicted to field-sports, and generally absent in pursuit of wild beasts for three or four months every year ; but, whether they were or were not present at the killing of the great Garhmuktesar tiger, they could not say.

Most persons would, after examining this evidence, be

¹ A small principality in Rohilkhand, between Murādābād and Bareilly (Barēli).

tolerably well satisfied that the said tiger had really been killed at the time and place, and by the persons mentioned by A and B ; but, to establish the fact judicially, it would be necessary to bring A, B, C, D, E, and F, the Nawāb of Rāmpur, the minister of the King of Oudh, and the goldsmith to the criminal court at Meerut, to be confronted with the person whose interest it was that A and B should not be believed. They would all, perhaps, come to the said court from the different quarters of the world in which they had thought themselves snugly settled ; but the thing would annoy them so much, and be so much talked of, that sporting gentlemen, nawābs, ministers, and goldsmiths would in future take good care to have “ forgotten ” everything connected with the matter in dispute, should another similar reference be made to them, and so A and B would never again have any chance.

Thug approvers, whose evidence we required, were employed in all parts of India, under the officers appointed to put down these associations ; and it was difficult to bring all whose evidence was necessary at the trials to the court of the district in which the particular murder was perpetrated. The victims were, for the most part, money-carriers, whose masters and families resided hundreds of miles from the place where they were murdered, or people on their way to their distant homes from foreign service. There was no chance of recovering any of the property taken from the victims, as Thugs were known to spend what they got freely, and never to have money by them ; and the friends of the victims, and the bankers whose money they carried, were everywhere found exceedingly averse to take share in the prosecution.

To obviate all these difficulties separate courts were formed, with permission to receive whatever evidence they might think likely to prove valuable, attaching to each portion, whether documentary or oral, whatever weight it might seem to deserve. Such courts were formed at Hyderabad, Mysore, Indore, Lucknow, Gwālior, and were

presided over by our highest diplomatic functionaries, in concurrence with the princes at whose courts they were accredited; and who, at Jubbulpore, were under the direction of the representative of the Governor-General of India.¹ By this means we had a most valuable species of unpaid agency; and I believe there is no part of their public life on which these high functionaries look back with more pride than that spent in presiding over such courts, and assisting the supreme government in relieving the people of India from this fearful evil.²

¹ The special laws on the subject, namely:—Acts xxx. of 1836; xviii. of 1837; xix. of 1837; xviii. of 1839; xviii. of 1843; xxiv. of 1843; xiv. of 1844; v. of 1847; x. of 1847; iii. of 1848; and xi. of 1848, are printed in p.p. 353-357 of the author's *Report on Budhuk alias Bagree Decoits, etc.* (1849).

² I may here mention the names of a few diplomatic officers of distinction who have aided in the good cause. *Of the Civil Service*—Mr. F. C. Smith, Mr. Martin, Mr. George Stockwell, Mr. Charles Fraser, the Hon. Mr. Wellesley, the Hon. Mr. Shore, the Hon. Mr. Cavendish, Mr. George Clerk, Mr. L. Wilkinson, Mr. Bax; *Majors-General*—Cubbon and Fraser; *Colonels*—Low, Stewart, Alves, Spiers, Caulfield, Sutherland, and Wade; Major Wilkinson; and, among the foremost, Major Borthwick and Captain Paton. [W. H. S.]

The author's characteristic modesty has prevented him from dwelling upon his own services, which were greater than those of any other officer. Some idea of them may be gathered from the collection of papers entitled *Ramaseena*, the contents of which are enumerated in the Bibliographical Note, *ante*. Colonel Meadows Taylor has given a more popular account of the measures taken for the suppression of Thuggee (thagī) in his *Confessions of a Thug*, written in 1837, and published originally in 1839. The Thug organization dated from ancient times, but attracted little notice from the East India Company's government until the author, then Captain Sleeman, submitted his reports on the subject while employed in the Sāgar and Nerbudda Territories, where he had been posted in 1820. He proved that the Thug crimes were committed by a numerous and highly organized fraternity operating in all parts of India. In consequence of these reports, Mr. F. C. Smith, Agent to the Governor-General in the Sāgar and Nerbudda Territories, was invested, in the year 1829, with special powers, and the author, then Major Sleeman, was employed, in addition to his district duties, as Mr. Smith's coadjutor and assistant. In 1835 the author was relieved from district work, and appointed

General Superintendent of the operations for the suppression of the Thug gangs. He went on leave to the hills in 1836, and on resuming duty in February, 1839, was appointed Commissioner for the suppression of Thuggee and Dacoity, which office he continued to hold in addition to his other appointments. Between 1826 and 1835, 1,562 prisoners were tried for the crime of Thuggee, of whom 1,404 were hanged or transported for life. Some individuals are said to have confessed to over 200 murders, and one confessed to 719. The Thug approvers, whose lives were spared, were detained in a special prison at Jubbulpore, where the remnant of them, with their families, are still kept under *surveillance*. They are employed in a tent and carpet factory, known as the School of Industry, which was founded in 1838 by the author and Captain Charles Brown. If released, they would probably resume their hereditary occupation, which exercised an awful fascination over its votaries. Most of the Thug gangs had been broken up by 1860, but cases of Thuggee have occurred occasionally since that date. A gang of Kahārs (palanquin bearers) committed a series of Thug murders in, I think, 1877, at Etāwa, in the North-Western Provinces. The office of Superintendent of Thuggee and Dacoity is still kept up, but the officer in charge is more concerned with Dacoity (that is to say, organized gang-robbery with violence) in the Native States than with the secret crime of Thuggee. It is never safe to assume in India that any ancient practice has been suppressed, and I have little doubt that, if administrative pressure were relaxed, the old form of Thuggee would again be heard of. The occasional discovery of murdered beggars, who could not have been killed for the sake of their property, leads me to suppose that the Megpunnia variety of Thuggee, that is to say, murder of poor persons in order to kidnap and sell their children, is still sometimes practised.

Among the officers named by the author the best known is Sir Mark Cubbon, who came to India in 1800, and died at Suez in 1861. During the interval he had never quitted India. He ruled over Mysore for nearly thirty years with almost despotic power, and reorganized the administration of that country with conspicuous success. (*Men whom India has Known*, Second Edition, By J. J. Higginbotham, Madras, 1874.)

The Hon. Frederick John Shore, of the Bengal Civil Service, officiated in 1836 as Civil Commissioner and Political Agent of the Sāgar and Nerbudda Territories. In 1837 he published his *Notes on Indian Affairs* (London, 2 vols. 8vo), a series of articles dealing in the most outspoken way with the abuses and weaknesses of Anglo-Indian administration at that time.

Mr. F. C. Smith was Agent to the Governor-General at Jubbulpore in 1830 and subsequent years. The author was then immediately

subordinate to him. Messrs. Martin and Wellesley were Residents at Holkar's court at Indore. Mr. Stockwell tried some of the Thug prisoners at Cawnpore and Allahabad as Special Commissioner. This duty was in addition to his ordinary duties. Correspondence between him and the author is printed in *Ramaseeana*. Mr. Charles Fraser preceded the author in charge of the Sāgar district, and in January, 1832, resumed charge of the revenue and civil duties of that district, leaving the criminal work to the author. The Hon. Mr. Cavendish was Resident at Sindhia's court at Gwālīor; Mr. George Clerk became Sir George Clerk and Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, and ultimately Governor of Bombay. Mr. Lancelot Wilkinson was Political Agent in Bhopāl, and considered by the author to be "one of the most able and estimable members of the India Civil Service" (*Journey*, ii, 403). Mr. Bax was Resident at Indore; Colonel, afterwards Sir John Low was Resident at Lucknow, and had served at Jubbulpore; Colonel Stewart and Major-General Fraser were Residents at Hyderabad; Major (Colonel) Alves was Political Agent in Bhopāl and Agent in Rājputāna; Colonel Spiers was Agent at Nimach, and officiated as Agent in Rājputāna; Colonel Caulfield had been Political Agent at Harautī; Colonel Sutherland was Resident at Gwālīor, and afterwards Agent in Rājputāna. Colonel Wade (Sir C. M. Wade) had been Political Agent at Lūdiāna; Major Borthwick was employed at Indore; and Captain Paton was Assistant Resident at Lucknow. (See *Journey through Kingdom of Oudh*, vol. ii, pp. 152-169.)

Besides the officers above named, others are specified in *Ramaseeana* as having done good service.



CHAPTER XIV

Basaltic Cappings of the Sandstone Hills of Central India—
Suspension Bridge—Prospects of the Nerbudda Valley—Deification of a Mortal.

ON the 29th¹ we came on to Patthariā, a considerable little town thirty miles from Sāgar, supported almost entirely by a few farmers, small agricultural capitalists, and the establishment of a native collector.² On leaving Patthariā, we ascend gradually along the side of the basaltic hills on our left to the south for three miles to a point whence we see before us this plane of basaltic cappings extending as far as the eye can reach to the west, south, and north, with frequent breaks, but still preserving one uniform level. On the top of these tables are here and there little conical elevations of laterite, or indurated iron clay.³ The cappings everywhere repose immediately upon the sandstone of the Vindhya range; but they have occasional beds of limestone, formed apparently by springs rising from their sides, and strongly impregnated with

¹ November, 1835.

² In the Damoh district, twenty-four miles west of Damoh. The name appears to be derived from the "great quantity of hewn stone (Hind. *patthar*) lying about in all directions." The Gazetteer calls the place "a considerable village."

³ A very peculiar formation, known only in India, Burma, Sumatra, Malacca, and Siam. It is of a reddish ferruginous, or brick-dust colour, sometimes deepened into dark red. It hardens and darkens by exposure to air, and is occasionally used as a building stone. The high-level laterite "probably consists of altered volcanic detritus, perhaps of scoriæ and lapilli." (*Manual of the Geology of India*, by Medlicott and Blanford, Calcutta, 1879, Part i, p. xlv, and Ch. xv; Balfour's *Cyclopædia*, s.v.) See *ante*, p. 63.

carbonic acid gas. For the most part this is mere travertine, but in some places they get good lime from the beds for building.

On the 1st of December we came to the pretty village of Sanodā, near the suspension bridge built over the river Biās by Colonel Presgrave, while he was assay master of the Sāgar mint.¹ I was present at laying the foundation-stone of this bridge in December, 1827. Mr. Maddock was the Governor-General's representative in these territories, and the work was undertaken more with a view to show what could be done out of their own resources, under minds capable of developing them, than to supply any pressing or urgent want.

The work was completed in June, 1830; and I have several times seen upon the bridge as many as it could hold of a regiment of infantry while it moved over; and, at other times, as many of a corps of cavalry, and often several elephants at once. The bridge is between the points of suspension two hundred feet, and the clear portion of the platform measures one hundred and ninety feet by eleven and a half. The whole cost of the work amounted to about fifty thousand rupees; and, under a less able and careful person than Colonel Presgrave, would have cost, perhaps, double the amount. This work has been declared by a very competent judge to be equal to any structure of the same kind in Europe, and is eminently calculated to show what genius and perseverance can produce out of the resources of a country even in the rudest state of industry and the arts.

The river Nerbudda neither is, nor ever can, I fear, be made navigable, and the produce of its valley would require

¹ The Sāgar mint was erected in 1820 by Captain Presgrave, the assay master, and used to employ four hundred men, but, after about ten or twelve years, the business was transferred to Calcutta, and the buildings converted to other uses (*Gazetteer*). Mints are now kept up at Calcutta and Bombay only. The Biās is a small stream flowing into the Sunār river, and belonging to the Jumna river system. The author writes the name Beeose.

to find its way to distant markets over the Vindhya range of hills to the north, or the Sātpura to the south. If the produce of the soil, mines, and industry of the valley cannot be transported to distant markets, the government cannot possibly find in it any available net surplus revenue in money ; for it has no mines of the precious metals, and the precious metals can flow in only in exchange for the produce of the land, and the industry of the valley that flows out. If the government wishes to draw a net surplus revenue from the valley or from the districts that border upon it, that is, a revenue beyond its expenditure in support of the local public establishments, it must either draw it in produce, or for what can be got for that produce in distant markets.¹ Hitherto little beyond the rude produce of the soil has been able to find its way into distant markets from the valley of the Nerbudda ; yet this valley abounds in iron mines,² and its soil, where unexhausted by cropping, is of the richest quality.³ It is not then too

¹ Since the author's time the conditions have been completely changed by the introduction of railways. The East Indian, Great Indian Peninsular, and other railways now enter the Nerbudda Valley, and the produce of most districts can readily be transported to distant markets. A large enhancement of the land revenue is being obtained by the revision of the settlement now in progress.

² Details will be found in the *Central Provinces Gazetteer*. The references are collected under the head "Iron" in the index to that work. Chapter VIII. of Ball's *Economic Geology of India* gives full information concerning the iron mines of the Central Provinces and all parts of India. This work forms Part III. of the *Manual of the Geology of India*.

³ The soil of the valley of the Nerbudda, and that of the Nerbudda and Sāgar territories generally, is formed for the most part of the detritus of trap-rocks, that everywhere covered the sandstone of the Vindhya and Sātpura ranges which run through these territories. This basaltic detritus forms what is called the black cotton soil by the English, for what reason I know not. [W. H. S.] The reason is that cotton is very largely grown in the Nerbudda Valley, both on the black soil and other soils. In Bundēlkhānd the black, friable soil, with a very high proportion of organic matter, is called "mār," and is chiefly devoted to raising crops of wheat, gram, or chick-pea (*Cicer arietinum*), linseed, and